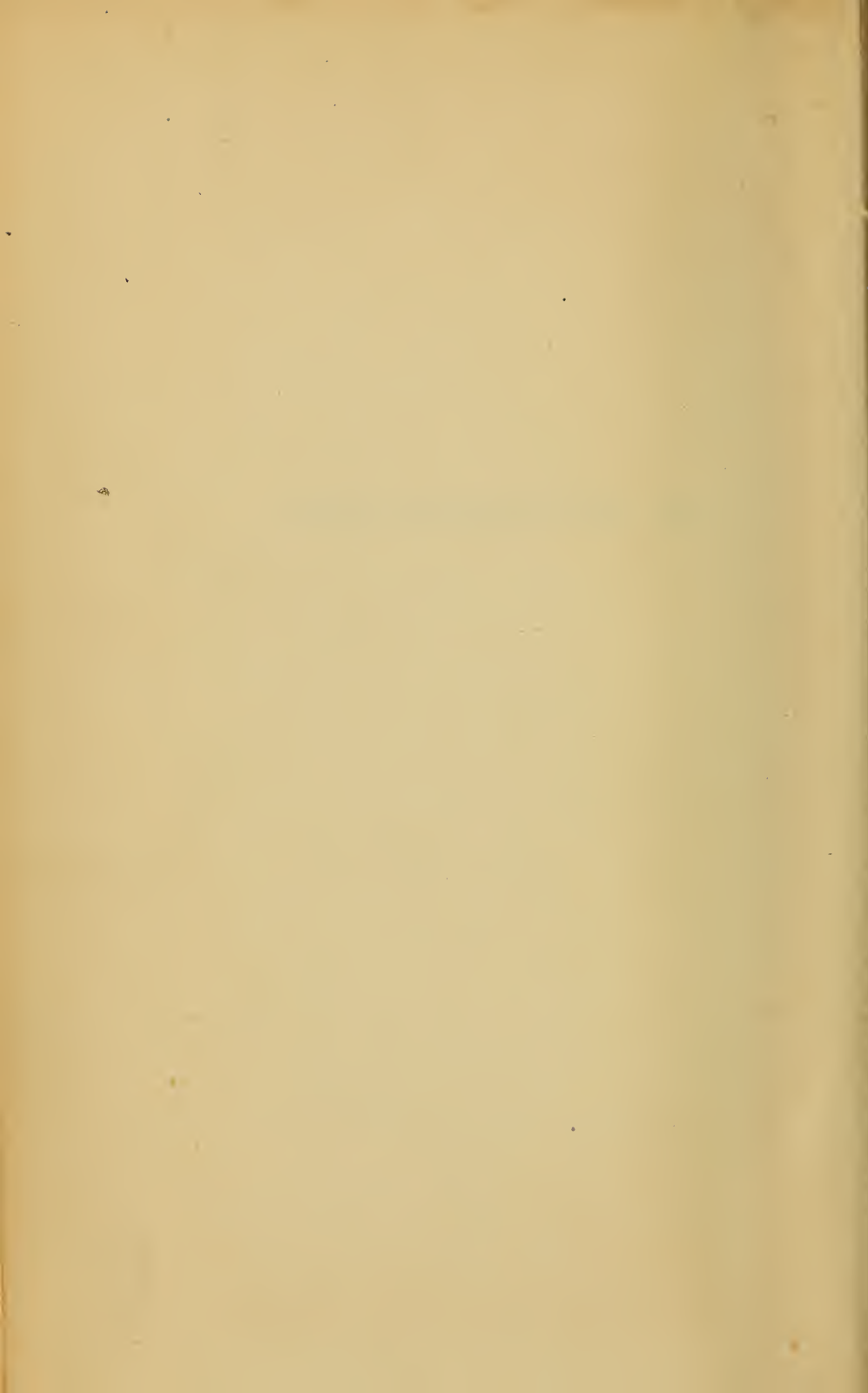


MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY





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EDGAR WALLACE
FROM THE PAINTING BY P. TENNYSON COLE

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

The last work of
EDGAR WALLACE

*With coloured frontispiece
and 18 illustrations*

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INTRODUCTION

IN introducing these letters, I should like to explain how they came to be written in diary form.

When my husband's trip to Hollywood was at first discussed, it was our hope that I should be able to accompany him, but the illness of my little girl and business ties in London made it impossible for me to get away until February. This, then, was to be the first time for fifteen years that I should not be in the closest touch with all his activities.

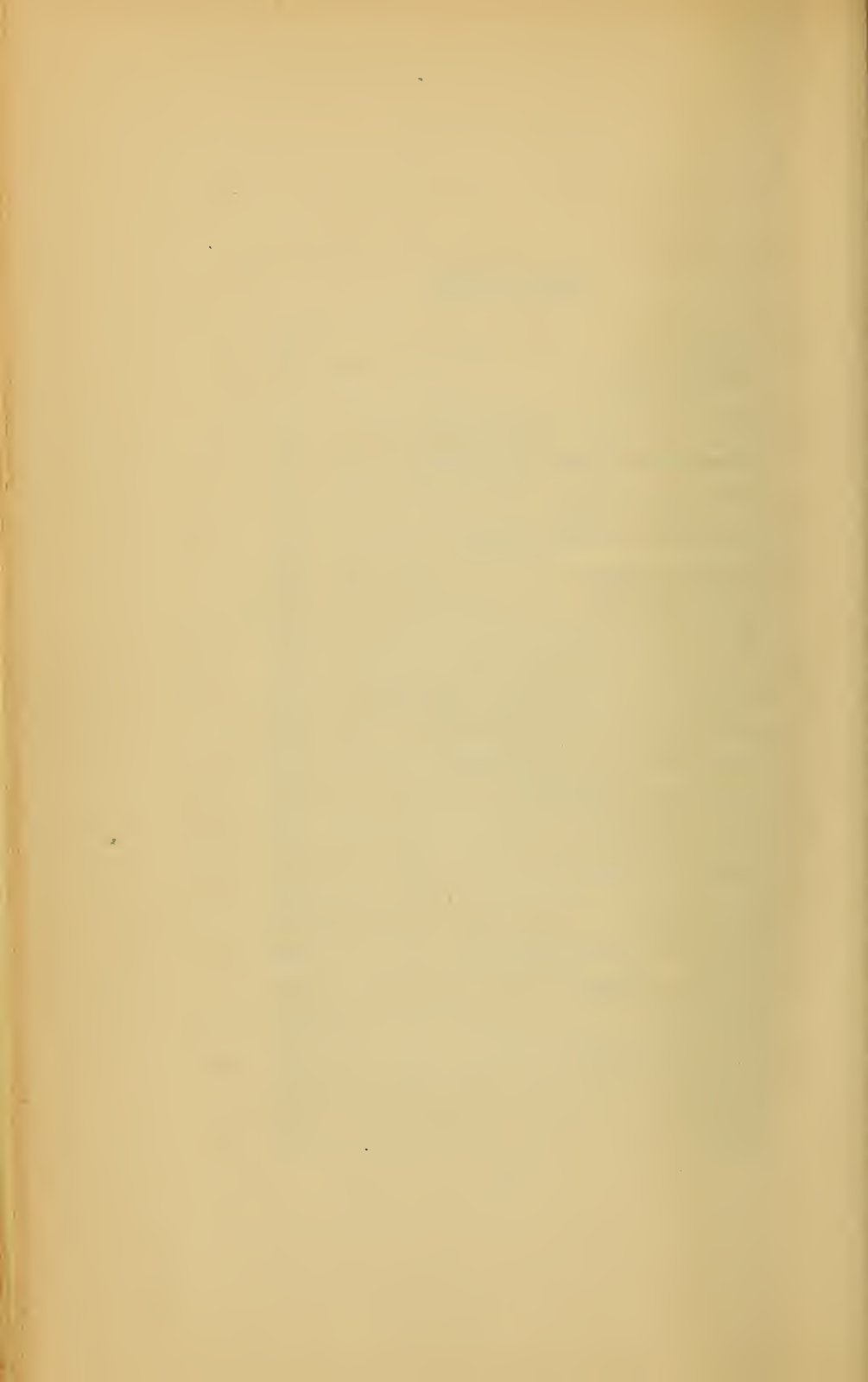
We had discussed this trip to Hollywood so many times and both realized the enormous possibilities that might materialize if his work there was successful, and though my husband was a prolific letter-writer, I wanted a more detailed account of his impressions than I should, in all probability, get from his more personal letters.

It was, therefore, with the idea of keeping me posted of daily events that Edgar dictated this diary which was sent to me regularly every week while he was away, in addition to his personal letters.



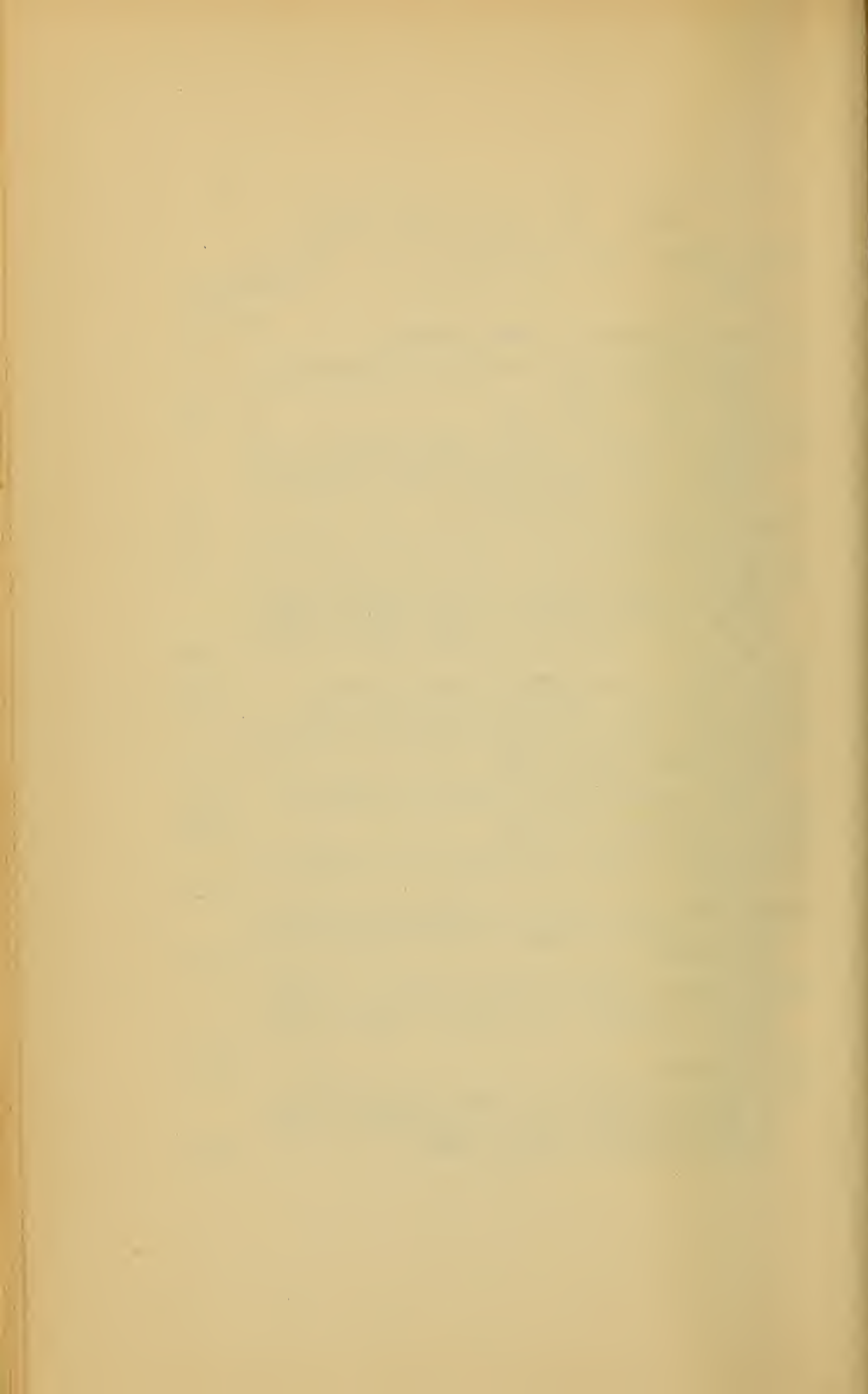
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AT SEA

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AT SEA

Monday, 23rd November, 1931.

IT is rather sad going away—sadder than anybody knows—and more unreal than any sailing I have ever made, with paper streamers being thrown from the upper deck to the quay.

The suite is a very comfortable one. It is old Chinese stuff, black lacquer and copper and gold. The beds are terribly comfortable. I have only slept in one of them, but there are two. Bob [Mr. Robert Curtis, Mr. Wallace's secretary] has a very comfortable cabin on the other side, also with two beds, only one of which, he informs me, he has occupied.

I don't know who is on board the ship, except a man who is a colonel, a member of the Garrick Club, and who has drawn Nestorian.

I tried to get through to you on Monday night by phone, but the aerial had been carried away in a gale. I must say we didn't notice the gale in the ship, though Robert [Robert Downs, Mr. Wallace's valet] was looking green and was more spring-heeled than ever.

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I am writing the first part of this on Monday night. I have developed a husky throat, for which I had a small throat syringe and a bottle of dope, which have not been packed. Otherwise I have twenty-five of everything.

The weather has been quite good. We had a bit of a gale yesterday, but I hardly noticed it. A swell has been running ever since we left Bishop's Rock. To-day there has been a strong head wind, so Bob tells me, but the ship is wonderfully steady. We are due on Friday, so we are breaking no records.

I have had radios from Mark Ostrer, Balcon—in fact, I enclose you the whole of them.

I like "Juan in America", but I think "The Forge" is very good stuff indeed, and near to being a classic. The curious thing is that both books contain the word "amoral", which does not appear in my Oxford Dictionary, but which Bob says means "unmoral".

Practically I have done no work at all. I have just been sitting around, thinking what I'd do if somebody gave me a million pounds.

The beds are very comfortable: I think I've told you that. It is a perfectly placed suite, right in the centre of the boat.

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Tuesday, 24th November, 1931.

The seas got up last night and we had one or two bad ones. At about eleven o'clock we took a sea over the bows which must have been a real snorter. It made the ship absolutely shudder. What happened was that a big sea broke over the fo'c'sle, came down the top of the bo'sun's cabin, bent in the plates, and twisted the girders as if they had been made of paper. The bo'sun's cabin and about six other cabins were washed out. And yet the effect on us in our cabins was extraordinarily little. We jumped about a bit, but nothing very uncomfortable, although half the passengers are down sick. Neither Bob nor I have the least discomfort, and even the greenish Robert—who is always asleep when you want him, and by some mysterious means never gets himself called in time—shows no sign of distress.

I had my usual sleep—three and a half hours, two and a half hours, and an hour—and was up at six. As we gain an hour every day, time seems to pass more slowly. We have done no work at the moment.

This morning I had a mysterious cable from Bryan [Mr. Wallace's eldest son]: "Tremendous

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luck", which I presume is a hearty good wish and not a laconic announcement that I have drawn the winner of the Calcutta Sweep.

I hope to get through to you to-day by phone if they have repaired the aerial which was carried away. At the moment we have a 60 m.p.h. head wind, an almost cloudless sky, and a long swell of sea. The wireless says that New York is having a heat wave and that you are under a blanket of fog. My mind instantly flies to Wyndham's Theatre, but I am really not worried about that at all.

I think I shall change the play so as to make it less real and more theatrical. After all, people want to be pleased and not harrowed; so the lady must be altered, though I am afraid I cannot make her respectable.

I always think that Tuesday morning breaks the back of the journey, and that by Wednesday morning the trip is all over. I wondered if next year, everything being grand, we'd take you, Penny [Penelope, his daughter], and Miss Ayling to Canada in this ship. From Cherbourg to the mouth of the St. Lawrence is only two and three-quarter days. There is a day and a half on perfectly smooth river water going up the St. Lawrence to Quebec. We can go on by another steamer to

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Montreal and even to Toronto—my idea of a good six-weeks' summer holiday. You might think that out.

Wednesday, 25th November, 1931.

The seas went down very considerably last night, but we have lost so much time that the clock was not put back an hour, to everybody's confusion. Practically the whole of the dining-room turned up an hour late for breakfast, and Robert asked me, in his blankest and most bovine fashion, if anything had happened.

From your radio I gather that you have heard something in London about the ship being late or being hit by the storm. It is really the most wonderful ship I have ever been in, for though she shivered a bit, one didn't even have to hold on to the table, and there hasn't been a fiddle on any of the dining-room tables since she started.

I finished two articles, but I have done no serious work, and probably shan't.

I met a Canadian member of Parliament on deck this morning, and he made me walk three times round the deck to my intense annoyance. I am already feeling its effects, and have a passionate desire to go to bed, although it is only eleven

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o'clock in the morning. At the moment we are bowling along steadily, though there is a sort of sea running, and there is still a certain amount of wind. We might be going up the Solent. Visibility is poor ; there is a sort of a fog on, but nothing to cause us to check speed. (I think the fog is fine rain, which probably means that we are coming into the Gulf Stream.)

My intention when I started was to do at least sufficient work to pay my passage, and I think I have just about done that. (Small stuff : articles, etc.)

It will make it rather awkward getting into New York on Saturday morning. Saturday is practically a day wasted, and I am afraid I shan't leave New York till Monday night, but that can't be helped.

Thursday Morning, 26th November.

Since I wrote the above we passed into a more or less halcyon sea, and the skipper decided that he might be able to get into New York on Friday, so another boiler has been put on and we have been whacking along ever since. It was perfectly calm, smooth, and lovely all yesterday. I went

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in and watched them dancing in the Empress room and stayed there till twelve.

When I woke at five this morning we were in a choppy, not to say troublous ocean, and the "Empress of Britain" was driving through it at 23 knots. She jumped and bucked and rolled, but, extraordinarily enough, to no uncomfortable extent. There was a bit of a storm on at 5.20, and I saw the lightning through my curtains—only one flash, but that fairly continuous. I got up at six and had my coffee.

Bob, who has taken sleeping lessons from Robert, claims that it was his first sleepless night—so apparently the liner has been doing things while I was slumbering.

I met several interesting people, including the proprietors of two famous remedies. I don't know whether they are the proprietors or the barkers, but they fix all the radio talks. They were very interesting, nice, quiet men, who apparently travel between the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York and the Ritz in London.

It was grand hearing you on the telephone—the most exciting adventure, though it was all done in a very commonplace fashion. The chief operator came into my sitting-room, took up the telephone, said, "We'll take Mrs. Wallace now",

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waited a few minutes, and then said, "She's not at Wyndham's Theatre, but they're trying to get her."

About ten minutes later he handed me the phone, told me where you were, and lo ! your voice came through as plainly as if it were in the next room. It was thrilling to feel that this ship, an insignificant atom off the Newfoundland Banks, was carrying on a conversation with Yeoman House !

I had a wireless from Carl [Carl Brandt, Mr. Wallace's agent] asking me what time I arrived in Quebec ! He was under the impression that this ship went there.

I am writing this about 10.30 Thursday morning, which is 2.30 in London. We are still pushing through the rough seas, and evidently the extra boiler is doing its bit. We shall be in quarantine at four o'clock to-morrow, which will be nine o'clock English time. We land the same night, which will save us a lot of time and give me a chance of seeing Nigel Bruce and Charles Laughton on Friday night. I think I will ask Nigel to come as my guest to the Chatham on Friday night.

I repeat that this is the grandest ship on the ocean, with the finest staff I have ever met, all very young and efficient ; the perfect crew and

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service. We have got on board a wonderful broadcasting station and the best telephone service in any ship. They have a much smoother crossing to Canada, by the way.

It is quite warm to-day, and we are running again into blue skies. I should think we were very nearly out of the squall which disturbed us in the night.

Friday, 27th November, 1931.

Absolutely nothing occurred yesterday of any importance, except getting a wireless from you. The seas subsided, and this morning when we woke it was like sailing on Regent's Park pond.

We are docking at about eight to-night—between seven and eight—which will mean that I shan't be in my hotel till about nine at the earliest and that will be two o'clock in the morning, English time. I will ask you to give me a place where I can call you early in the morning.

I'd like you to register a telegraphic address for yourself at Yeoman House. The Western Union and Marconi will do this for you. If they give the same code word you can cable it out to me.

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There has been quite a run on autographs the last two or three days. Sir Henry Cole, who is on board, and I, sat up with a party of Canadians till about one o'clock this morning.

I have finished "The Forge". A girl who lives in Alabama told me last night that it is the best picture of southern life without flattery and without unkindness that she has ever read.

We did some more work yesterday, and I think I have just about paid my passage. It is the first time I have ever worked on a ship, and although I haven't written the story I intended writing, and haven't even rewritten the play, I have done enough to amuse me without giving me any unusual fatigue.

It is going to be very interesting to discover the attitude of R.K.O., which I shall find out when I get to New York. I am curious to know whether they would like me to do a lot of work on my way across. On their attitude depends the length of my stay in America. I will do a very full two months for them ; at the end of that time they have either got to be ecstatically pleased or I shall be homeward bound. I am like that.

Robert is getting more or less coherent. He is terribly anxious to please, and even his daily errors are becoming less objectionable. The

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great point, of course, is that he is anxious to do everything he can. He came this morning in a state of wild excitement and said he had seen a lot of sparrows flying round the ship. I explained to him that sparrows were no — sailors, and that they were probably albatrosses.

I have never seen a ship like this, so equipped. They carry three trained nurses, amongst other things. They have a marvellous operating theatre and a dental parlour, beauty shop for ladies and every kind of bath.

By to-morrow we shall forget that we were ever on a ship, and for the next week life will be a matter of train journeys. I shall be very glad when I have turned around, so to speak, facing you.

Seriously, I am going to see what opening there is for Pat [his daughter] in Hollywood. Although I know she'll hate coming out alone, if there is something good I will let her come out for a month or two.

That is about all for the moment. I want to catch the mail, and I will wire you all up-to-date news to-night.

AT NEW YORK

AT NEW YORK

Saturday, 28th November, 1931.

WE came through the fog yesterday, past Sandy Hook, and into quarantine, to find Fort Hamilton and all the shores white with snow. There had been a snowstorm in the morning. There was the usual long delay at quarantine, made longer because the C.P.R. people were not used to the American method. There was also the inevitable incursion of reporters and photographers, who lined me up on the deck, but this time they had to shoot in the dark with flash-lamps.

I got through first by favouritism, and at about half-past seven we berthed. Carl Brandt was there to meet me, and when I got to the hotel I found Nigel and Harold Freedman [Brandt and Freedman are Mr. Wallace's agents], and we had a sort of high tea together.

Carl thinks he can sell "The Frightened Lady", but that will mean holding up the English publication. He also thinks I can get a big sale with the *Saturday Evening Post*.

In addition, there was present the man who produced "The Criminal Code", and who wants

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to produce "The Frightened Lady". We haven't fixed a date for the latter play; in view of the fact that it may be published as a serial there is good reason for holding our hands.

I told them the story of "The Green Pack", and they were absolutely enthralled. Carl read the play last night, and so did Harold, and they are terribly enthusiastic about it. They agree with Gerald [Sir Gerald du Maurier], or, rather, with the criticisms that have been offered in England, that the woman should be made a little more sympathetic, and that I shall proceed to do. They were here till 11 o'clock.

This morning I set your little French alarm clock to call me at 7.30, as I had put through a Transatlantic telephone call to you. As a matter of fact it was Robert knocking at the door which woke me. Your voice sounded very clear, and it was delightful speaking with you.

While I was at breakfast I got your wire about the Manchester November Handicap. After breakfast came the lawyer from the R.K.O. and the Century Play Company, and we battled out the contract, with Harold holding a watching brief. The consequences are satisfactory: we are leaving on Tuesday at two o'clock for Chicago and the woolly West.



A FAMOUS PHOTOGRAPH OF EDGAR WALLACE



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May I say in passing that that pomade you got for me set up such an irritation on my head that I had to wash it all out and bathe my tortured scalp with witch hazel.

Another domestic item: I developed a sore throat—a catarrhal condition, which I am now battling with the inhalant which Bob succeeded in buying here, to get myself right. I haven't a cold, I hope.

Tookie rang me up and said she would come to tea at six, which means she won't come at all.

Heather Thatcher is in New York. She sent me an ecstatic wire, but I haven't seen her, and when I called her up this morning she was out.

Tell Pat that everybody sends their kind regards to her, and it goes without saying that everybody spoke about you and how wonderful you were. I know this doesn't mean a thing to you, but I'm just telling you.

I had my plans made if the deal had fallen through; I was coming back on the "Empress of Britain" to Madeira, Gibraltar, and Monte Carlo, and going on from Monte Carlo overland to Caux. However, that happy development belongs to the legion of dreams, and when the "Empress of Britain" sails I shall be well on my way to Hollywood.

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My address at Hollywood, so far as I know, will be the Ambassadors Hotel for a while, but you will have plenty of advice about this.

It is snowing at the moment, so we are probably a little worse off than you. I have a terrific lot of work to do to keep my articles going. By the way, I am doing three articles for *The Daily Mail* on Hollywood.

Nigel asked me to send his love, and perhaps one day when I am telephoning to you before I leave, you might have Bunny [Nigel Bruce's wife] handy so that he can speak a few words to her. We will give him that treat. You might organise this. He is coming to breakfast with me to-morrow morning, and bringing Leslie Banks.

Charles Laughton strolled in at lunchtime on his way to his matinée. The play closes down to-night, and he is going on to Chicago at two in the morning. I didn't see Elsa [Lanchester]; she wasn't very well.

I think that's about all the news. Obviously I have got to work pretty hard in the next month or two, but I shan't mind that.

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Sunday, 29th November, 1931.

Tookie came at five. She looked a little tired. I think she is having a lot of trouble, but she is the same old Tookie. She was here for an hour and a half.

Carol Hill and Carl Brandt came to dinner. It was the first time I had met her, and I like her very much. It is very curious that she has been to Portland Place, in Pat's room and in your room, that she knows you both, and that she has never met me.

We talked of the plays, particularly of "The Green Pack". I am going "on the air" to-night just to say "Hullo, America!" and possibly I may go out this afternoon.

It has stopped snowing, but the skies are still grey. Bob says it's milder, but I'll take his word for it.

Carl is very anxious to put over some serials, but mainly we discussed "The Green Pack", and they take the same view as Gerald.

I think I was a little led astray by the delicacy of my dialogue, and I am going to have another cut at that same dialogue and see what can be done about it.

By the way, Tookie said she would come out

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and spend Christmas at Hollywood, but I don't for one moment imagine she will.

I have not heard from Heather Thatcher since she sent me a wire.

Nigel says he thinks that Gladys Henson is still here, but he is very vague about it.

Carl and Carol want me to see a play called "Counsel at Law", by Elmer Rice. They say it is the best thing in town. It is one of those plays that require a special actor, a brilliant Jew named Muni.

Carl thinks that "The Green Pack" is the biggest certainty he has ever read. We sat over dinner till half-past ten. It was quite an amusing evening.

The great thing when I get to Hollywood is to get a place where I can work. I am told that the Garden of Allah is full of odd English people, so I shall probably stay at the Ambassadors for a little while until I can get myself fixed up in the ideal apartment.

Carl brought me an electric shaver, with which you require no soap or lather. You just put the apparatus to your face and it takes off your whiskers. I tried it last night ; it wasn't at all bad. I am giving it a thorough try-out this morning. I am not so sure it will give me a close enough shave.

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Sunday Evening.

At ten o'clock came Nigel Bruce and Leslie Banks to breakfast. They were here till past one, and we had quite a pleasant morning. Leslie is terribly nice. He is looking after Nigel like a father, and I must say Nigel is devoted to him.

We talked about the theatre and about the plays, and the possibility of Leslie playing in "The Green Pack". They are very keen on putting "The Green Pack" on quickly. They think there is a smash hit in it. But I told them that whatever happened they couldn't have Nigel, because I wanted him for England.

They don't know how their play is going to turn out; they are still rehearsing it. They will wire me at Hollywood and tell me all about it.

I arranged to have Nigel on the phone to his wife, although he says he is certain to cry. In fact, he cried from Waterloo to Southampton; on the ship he had a pretty bad accident and nearly broke his neck. He is terribly homesick, and here he has my sincerest sympathy.

I am most anxious to get to Hollywood and just find out how bad or good it is, and what recreation the work offers.

Celia Johnson, who is terribly homesick, is the

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best Ophelia that has ever been seen, and people are raving about her.

I am not going "on the air" to-night. There is a tremendous drive to get money for the unemployed, and they want the hour for that purpose.

I had a phone message from Heather, who will see me at 9.30 to-night. It was very good to hear her old chuckle coming over the wire. She will be here for two weeks, and then I presume she is going back to England, but I'll be able to tell you about that to-morrow.

Carl and Carol came to tea and we discussed "The Case of the Frightened Lady"—the serial. I like Carol very much. She talks about you and Pat all the time.

Monday, 30th November, 1931.

Heather came at 10 o'clock, looking very brown and well. She plans to go to England after Christmas. She is full of Hollywood, its charm and its beauty, and wants to go back. I told her that if I could think of a good story in which she could play a part, I would put it up to R.K.O. She jumped at this.

The Wodehouses have, as you know, gone back. Heather strongly advises me to go to the

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Beverly-Wilshire to stay, and probably this will be my address.

Apparently I do not arrive until Saturday morning. I will wire you where you can pick me up en route if there is anything urgent.

I am going to tackle the play to-day, and I will send you back the revised version, copies of which I will have made here. (I put down thoughts as they occur to me, so don't worry about their inconsequence.)

Heather says that Hollywood is full of scandal. The directors' wives have nothing to do but to sit around and tell stories.

I am going to take her to the theatre to-night to see a play called "Counsel at Law", a success by Elmer Rice, the author of "Street Scene".

I hope you didn't mind my suggestion that Nigel should "talk in" to-night. The only thing I'm dreading is whether he bursts into tears.

It is a dreadful morning—darker than it can possibly be in London, and raining like hell.

Tuesday, 1st December, 1931.

I saw Nelson Doubleday ; he came at half-past twelve. He had been shooting ducks in South

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Carolina. Previous to his arrival two of his executives had come and we talked books.

In the afternoon I went on to Broadway and saw the chief of the R.K.O., Marcus, a very amusing man whom I liked. I had an amazing view of New York from the sixteenth floor of the Bond building. One saw the clouds coming over and absolutely engulfing the tops of all the high buildings. Some of the effects were beautiful.

When I got back I found the Literary Editress of the *Chicago Tribune* waiting, and soon after she had gone Nigel came with a terrific headache. He had a very bad accident on the boat, dislocating two of his neck bones. I made him take off his collar, which was too tight, and change his shirt for one of mine, and he looked rather good in it.

Then your call came through. He got a bit emotional, but he is terribly grateful, and rang me up this morning to thank me again.

It was grand hearing you because your voice was more distinct and more real than any other call I have had.

At half-past seven Heather came. She dined here with Nigel and me, and she and I saw "Counsel at Law". There is in it a brilliant actor called Paul Muni, who has come up from the Jewish Theatre. He gives an amazing perform-

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ance, the most natural thing I have ever seen. Gerald is one of the few men in the world who would really appreciate his value. He has so much restraint and charm.

I brought Heather back to the hotel to my room, and we had coffee together, and she left about midnight. She is a grand person.

I have all my tickets and reservations and heaven knows what.

There is not very much other news to give you, except that Tookie came to breakfast this morning. Apparently I had agreed to dine with her last night and forgot all about it, and so I compromised by getting her to come to breakfast. She loathed getting up so early, but she came. She was here for about an hour.

I will keep the diary up on the train and post it to you the moment I arrive at Los Angeles.



THE IRON ROAD TO CALIFORNIA



THE IRON ROAD TO CALIFORNIA

Tuesday afternoon.

THE last few hours in New York were rather hectic. I had an interview every ten minutes. Carl and Harold came and discussed contracts. I was interviewed by a reporter from Canada, and I saw Stanley Reinhardt. I was to have seen his mother on Sunday, but she didn't come. (As I dictate this in the train we have just passed Sing-Sing.)

I saw two men who were representing a motion picture annual ; they wanted me to take a page advertisement. They couldn't catch me with that racket, not if they tried in years, as they say.

As we were leaving the hotel, Anne McEwen turned up. She is a nice little thing, rather bright and bird-like, and apparently she's having a rotten time. Michael will remember her ; she was terribly kind to him, and she and Fayette, whom he will also remember, bought me the silver-backed hairbrush which was so scientifically left behind.

She wanted to know if there was any chance of doing any Press work for me, and if she could

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get an article from me ; and it struck me that it wouldn't be a bad idea, after I'd found out exactly what she was getting, to have her at Hollywood as a sort of Press agent, not to advertise me but to check the articles that are written about me.

After I'd left her—and a little bleak she was—I sent her a wire from the station, telling her to come on to Hollywood, and to draw the where-withal from Carl.

At the very last minute I saw Heather Thatcher and a very pretty girl on the station. Mrs. Haynes, I think her name is. She is English and a lovely creature. But our conversation was a succession of shouts through the window. It was just like old Heather to come down, race all along the train, get the wrong carriage, and turn up at the last second, panting for breath. She is a great girl, Heather !

I have got a very comfortable drawing-room, and Bob has a compartment next door, which he is allowing Robert to share. I think we shall have quite a busy and amusing trip across. I don't think I shall be able to do enough to send you from Chicago, but, anyway, it will be worth while sending even a little bit, because I can get it out of the way, and it's no effort to dictate a couple of pages and, so to speak, dispose of them.



[Claude Harris]

MRS. EDGAR WALLACE

FOR WHOM THESE VIVID IMPRESSIONS WERE RECORDED DAILY



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Behold us at the moment, sitting in our comfortable compartment, with a couch made up with a white sheet and two pillows, a table between Bob and me, and tea and buttered toast disappearing at intervals.

It looks as if we're going to do some work on the way over, for we haven't been out of New York six hours, and I've done two articles in addition to my article for you.

Robert is quite pop-eyed, and has been staring at the lordly or — Hudson—whichever way you look at it—for hours on end, and has been making rapid and illegible notes on the backs of envelopes.

So far as I can discover from Bob, they are just the names of the towns through which we pass, and as he has gathered the town from the advertisements in lights, which are often displayed twenty miles from the town, his log is likely to be of no value to any traveller who tries to follow the trail he has blazed.

It is now 8.30. I have had some tea brought in, and I can get tea all night from the club car. Isn't that wonderful?

I am working on the play to-morrow, and sending it back to Chicago to have it typed. You will get the revised version sooner, because I will send

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you on the little bits even though they are not fitted in, and tell you where they go.

I will get another crack in to-morrow morning if there is anything to report, and I shall post this at Chicago.

Good night, everybody.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1931.

I had a wonderful sleep, on two box mattresses, and didn't even waken up when they pushed us around at Buffalo. The food is marvellous on the train.

Last night we passed through a snowy landscape. Snow was falling heavily as we came through the streets of Syracuse. This morning there isn't a cloud in the sky. It was a cold night and the ground is covered with frost. The scenery is typical, more or less flat prairie, dotted with wooden shacks; little towns consisting of the usual wooden farmhouses, the inevitable motor-cars packed in front of each, and this is the scenery we shall see all day, for beyond Chicago is the corn belt.

I am very pleased with the work we did yesterday. Once we get settled down on The Chief,

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which is the name of the crack train of the Santa Fe, we shall be able to slip into it. As I shall fill up odd moments by writing to you, you will gather the amount of work we do by the size of your letter from Los Angeles.

After we get to L.A. my letters will come by air mail across the continent, so that really I shall be within about eight or nine days' communication of you. I hoped to do some work this morning, but it is such a lovely, lazy morning that I've done nothing, not even shaved yet, though we're exactly an hour and a half from Chicago.

Having slept on it, I am quite sure I've done the right thing in telling Anne McEwen to come over. She'll be a sort of extra secretary and take a lot of humdrum stuff off Bob's hands. Her main value, of course, will be to check up the extravagant statements that are made by the small army of motion picture people who live around Hollywood.

By the way, I am just reminded that we are passing through Indiana. Have you ever read "The Gentleman from Indiana"? It's a great story.

I haven't thought up any picture for anybody yet, but that will come along between now and Friday night. Being in a drawing-room on the

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

train, one is absolutely secluded, and I haven't the least idea what one of my fellow-passengers looks like. In a drawing-room you have a couch, two seats, a table, a private lavatory, and about seven electric lights, and you can control the heating. By day they leave out a couple of pillows and cover the seat with a sheet so that you can sleep if you wish.

That, I think, is all, because we shall have to pack up our typewriter.

Wednesday morning, 2nd December.

It was cold but sunny when we got to Chicago. We had to transfer across four blocks to the Dearborn station to catch the western flier, which, as I told you before, is called The Chief. I will attach a map to show you how we go.

We were met at the station by a representative of the R.K.O., who attended to everything, paid porters, had his car to take us across, in fact was a great blessing. His name is Branson, in case you come out and have to be personally conducted.

I sent you a wire that I had left Chicago in case you might think I'd been put on the spot. Capone is in gaol, and from the prison has been conducting

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the strike of cinematograph operators. He is the virtual head of the union. They bombed twelve theatres and killed three operators, and yesterday the theatres bought him off and ended the strike, paying \$175,000. He stipulated that all indictments against his assistants should be withdrawn, and that is how it goes in Chicago.

His case is going up to the Federal Court for review, and I don't think they have a leg to stand on. The question is whether a man may be convicted for an offence in the sense that he has got money by illegal means unless you can prove that he has obtained that money at all by any means, legal or illegal, and I don't think any court of appeal could possibly uphold the judgment.

He is serving eleven years.

Wednesday evening.

The day—I am writing at half-past eight, which is 2.30 a.m. Thursday in England—has been naturally a dull one. I haven't been working, owing mainly to the fact that I'm not feeling inclined.

We had a perfectly gorgeous day from the weather point of view. At about half-past four in

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the afternoon we came suddenly upon the Mississippi. It was quite a thrill. A great stretch of muddy yellow water, more like a lake or like a river that has overflowed its banks, spotted with black snags or carbonised tree trunks. It was almost as imposing as the Congo, though naturally the vegetation was not green but a shade of cinnamon brown. We crossed it at a place called Fort Madison, and at this spot I began to write a scene in the play. One gets bored with the interminable maize fields, or, rather, the untidy stalks from which the maize has been picked or plucked, garnered, gathered or harvested. Missouri, the country through which we are now passing, seems to be much more prosperous-looking and better organised than the State of Illinois, or even, if the truth be told, than the State of New York.

So far we have come through New York, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, and now, I imagine, we are on the edge of Kansas, because we are due in Kansas City in another hour. To-morrow we cut across a corner of Colorado.

If one likes to spend a night in Chicago there are only two consecutive nights to be spent in the train. You might remember this if it so happens that the doctor allows you to bring out Penny. It is the most comfortable trip. The drawing-room

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and the compartment adjoin. It struck me it would be marvellous for you to be in the drawing-room and Penny and Miss Ayling in the compartment. You are waited on by the most cheerful lot of Negro porters you can imagine. The food is too much for me ; it is so perfectly cooked, and a grilled chicken they brought me to-night almost tempted me to be a hog.

Robert is more pop-eyed than ever. He is very satisfactory in the sense that every ten minutes he expresses his gratitude that he has been allowed to realise one of the ambitions of his life. The other, which is to get married, he can realise for 7s. 6d.—or is that the price of a dog licence ? He is improving hourly, and you can almost see and hear his mind broadening.

He told me yesterday that he spends hours thinking how he can serve me best, and I honestly believe that this is true. I would say, taking the chance of a hell of a smack in the eye, that he is entirely satisfactory. What he will do when we get him to Hollywood I don't know. Bob has promised to watch over and guard him. I doubt it.

As I say, the Mississippi was a thrill. To-night some time we cross the Missouri, and that, I hope, will be the end of all this — river nonsense. After all, the Thames takes a lot of beating.

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To-morrow we go back an hour at Dodge City and then there will be seven hours between us. I had several ideas for pictures. I thought out a good plot to-day and remembered also an old plot for a serial which I feel may germinate while I am in Hollywood. If it works out as I think it will, it'll be a hell of a good mystery story.

Carl Brandt, by the way, goes to a devil of a lot of trouble, and he's the best serial specialist in America.

I think I can say that Bob is enjoying the trip as much as I am. Naturally I am looking forward to Hollywood to discover just where I am. I believe the general idea is that I shall do two pictures. Whether I do or not remains to be seen. If I only had to do two pictures, I'd come back next week. My intention is to make myself more or less useful, not to say indispensable.

There have, however, been changes. The new man, under Schnitzer, a fellow called Selnik, is quite young, and, I am told, "inclined to be gloomy", whatever that may mean. I presume it means he is artistic, and that's all to the good, because it's grand for somebody to be that way when so many of us are only just competent.

I don't want you to think that I am setting my mind on you bringing Penny out here. I merely

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mention it in passing. I set no great hopes on even your coming out, because I realise that it would be a terribly long way to go for Penny, and you'd hardly be out of England before you'd be worrying whether she'd fallen down the mountain side or was being engulfed in an avalanche.

I am certainly not going to rush back if I find I am doing the job right. It wouldn't be fair to you to go there with the absolute intention of returning at the end of two months. A lot will depend on how I go here, and a lot more on how you are going there. Once we get over Christmas and New Year's Day we'll get a better and clearer angle. Of course, there is the possibility that Penny will be so well that she could afford to come out in February and come home the long sea trip in March on the "Empress of Britain".

These are the merest idle speculations, and are on a par with telling Pat and Michael when they go back to school from their summer holidays that we'll have a grand time at Christmas, just to cheer them up. In this case I am cheering myself up, though my state of mind is quite equable and I am not at all depressed. In fact I could have knocked Willie Bruce's head off when he said, "Tell Jim the boy is very lonely".

Well, I guess that's all for to-night. To-morrow

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morning I will write the story of our arrival in Kansas City, and how the crowds were on the station to meet us, and what they said to me, and what I said back to them, and of all that befell.

It is rather interesting, as we come across the country, to see at intervals of forty or fifty miles the flashing lighthouses in the wilderness that guide the aerial mails across the continent.

Thursday morning, December 3rd, 1931.

We reached Kansas City on time and pulled out five or ten minutes late, which I presume they have made up in the night. I went to bed at eleven, not expecting to sleep so soon. It is rather a bore when you know you've got an extra hour and you've got to put your clock back in the morning. However, I must have been asleep almost immediately, and when I woke the clock said half-past five. Six and a half hours without waking is good going.

I went to sleep again till half-past seven, which is half-past six, and woke up to take a last glimpse of the State of Kansas.

We are now—8 a.m., 4 p.m. English time—

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cutting across a corner of Colorado, flat, prairie-like country, lightly powdered with snow.

At this season of the year the colouring is a sort of deep beige. There are some lovely sprawls of river. I don't think there is anything more beautiful than the green and purple of frozen water in the early morning. Naturally all the vegetation is burnt up, and what isn't beige is saffron.

Curiously enough, the towns, with their wide main streets, all about as wide as Portland Place, are more solid-looking than the towns back East. We have now passed the Middle West and have run into what is known as the mountain area.

I can't tell you how invigorating the sight of the sun is in this cloudless blue sky, and the clarity of the air.

Practically I haven't been outside a train since 2.45 on Tuesday afternoon, and it is curious how one hardly notices this fact. The journey, so far from being trying, is a grand rest; in my opinion it's got the ocean beaten to a frazzle.

The double windows of the compartment do not admit of real fresh air coming in, and I should imagine that about ten minutes of real fresh air in this part of the world would be quite enough.

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As one of the Pullman porters said : "We don't open the windows in the summer because it's too dusty, and we don't open the windows in the winter because it's too cold."

The only thing I miss is having any communication with the outer world, and apart from you that's grand, because there's no telephone, no appointments, nothing.

Thursday evening.

At about eight o'clock we ran into mountains, in the sense that they came into view. A very clearly defined mountain with a white summit, seen across a perfectly level plain, is an amazingly beautiful sight. I suppose the mountains must have been from 60 to 70 miles away ; it was two hours before we came abreast of them.

The country practically remains the same, part of the Californian desert ; sparse cattle country interspersed with big, rocky massifs, and all the same dingy yellow. More or less it is quite interesting.

I got out of the train for the first time on the borders of New Mexico at a place called Raton. The air was simply wonderful ; no cloud in the sky, and even the snow has now disappeared. We

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are about a quarter of an hour from Las Vegas, another New Mexican city.

In many ways the country strongly resembles South Africa ; the same vast, rolling pampas with mountains on the skyline, and the same flat-topped hills.

I want to insist that the air is so terribly dry that it must be a heaven-sent place for people with chest trouble. In fact, we passed a little sanatorium in a fold of the hills, isolated from everywhere. It looked like a collection of chicken houses, but then, most of the towns here seem to be made from a paper pattern and not to have worn too well.

We are promised another day to-morrow through the desert. We do most of our mountain climbing in the night. Los Angeles, of course, stands on the desert.

I am not rushing the play, because although I feel I could do it, I'd rather have it well in my mind, and the chances are that I shall have it typed in Hollywood and not in New York as I intended, and post you a copy direct from here so that you can get parts made.

I have not done any of the work I intended doing, and I think I am perhaps wise. What I am trying to do now is to think up skeletons of

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stories for pictures. I may yet do the play, but I am not sort of fretting about it.

I expect you will be rather in despair about answering these long letters, but, of course, I don't expect you to, unless you also can get into the habit of dictating the daily round.

HOLLYWOOD—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

HOLLYWOOD—FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Friday morning, 4th December, 1931.

WE haven't seen a cloud since Tuesday night, when we came through a snowstorm, and even then didn't see one. All day yesterday we climbed and scooted up and down hills, and all the time there was on our left and right a stretch of semi-desert backed by hills and mountains, and that scenery continued this morning, except that there was a whole lot of cactus plant visible.

I saw the sun rise: it was a most amazing spectacle. When it came up over the hills it was really a sun. We are on the last lap, running an hour late, which we may or may not pull up before we get to Los Angeles.

For over a thousand miles a well-kept road has run parallel with the line. I think this must be the Lincoln Highway. It is out of sight at the moment, but it will reappear from nowhere in a quarter of an hour's time, having taken a detour into the desert.

We are now approaching the hottest point of the trip, though it isn't at all warm this morning, despite the sun. This is a place called Needles,

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where in summer you suffocate. After that we go down to Los Angeles.

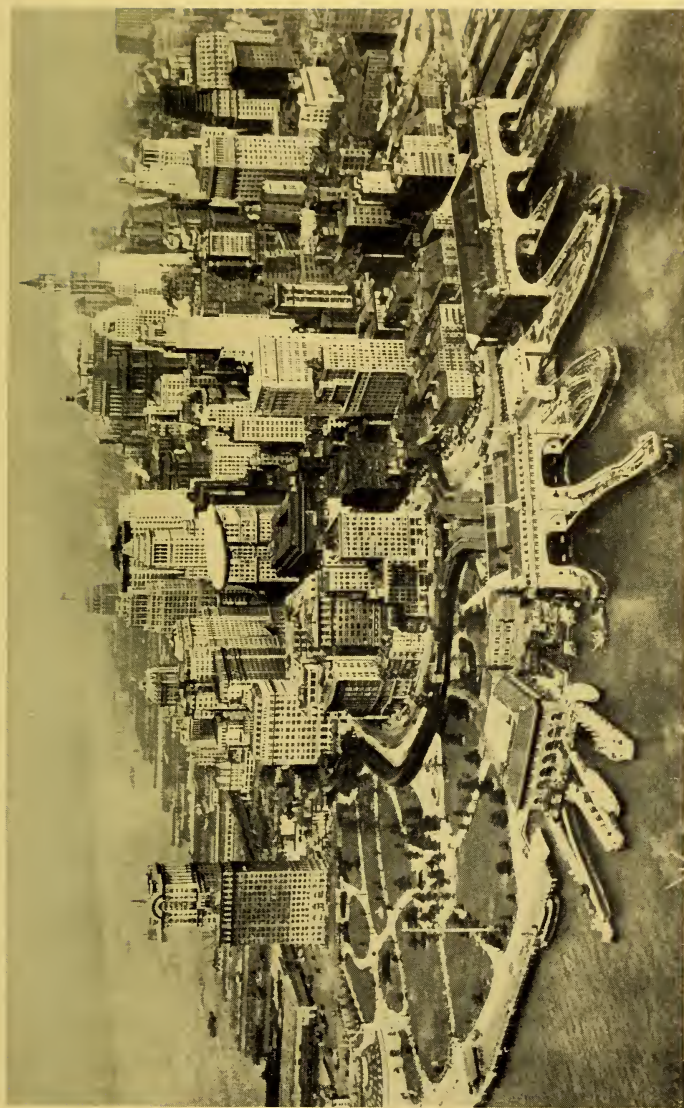
We have just passed over the Colorado River, shallow and very wide, for this is not the season of flood, and we are following its right bank. The country has changed, naturally, because of the irrigation it gives, and all the brown of the trees and shrubs has become green. There are also a large number of trees in leaf, which is rather remarkable.

I have worked on the play and put in some new scenes, but I am not going to send them off until I have sort of reviewed them quietly, which means reviewing the play. Personally I am rather inclined to think that the play should stand as originally written.

(As I wrote this we ran into Needles—which is California, full of palm trees and trees in leaf.)

Beyond Needles the country becomes delightful. Imagine grove after grove, millions of orange trees, all in bloom, beautiful streets with great, straight palm trees running up each side ; delightful little houses ; and, as a background to it all, the mountains and foothills.

We came into Los Angeles, an indescribable city which straggles all over the face of the earth. I was photographed when I got out of the train,



[Topical Press

AN AERIAL VIEW OF NEW YORK

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where I was met by the Press agent of the R.K.O.

From Los Angeles to Hollywood is, I think, about ten miles. When I tell you you are in boulevards and streets all the time, and you are never once in the open country or away from the stores, you will realise the extent of it.

The Beverly-Wilshire, which I pictured as being in the most rural surroundings, is in fact on the main street. The rooms are lovely but coldish, and it is chilly at nights, but in the daytime it is gorgeous. The porter dropped our typewriter at the railway station and broke it, so we started grand.

Hollywood seems to consist of filling stations, fruit markets, and drug stores. I suppose we passed forty filling stations on our way here, and heaven knows how many fruit markets, which are rather nice to see. The studio seems about a thousand miles away from here, but our present arrangements are in a state of flux.

There is no sign of a wild party. In fact, my first impressions of Hollywood are not exceptionally favourable. But we shall improve on all that, and I suppose I'm a bit tired.

I shall go to bed fairly early to-night and see what the place is like in the morning. I am going to the studio at nine to see Schnitzer, and really

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my first news of any account you will not have until to-morrow.

I got your wire, also Penny's "my dear boy" wire. By to-morrow I shall have done a lot of things and learnt a lot of things, including the way the mails go. I think, as a matter of fact, this letter, if it is posted to-night, will catch the next mail out. Love.

Saturday, 5th December, 1931.

This morning I got your overnight letter to tell me everything was grand. That's a great relief, I must say, to have no worries about home.

For some reason or other I woke up soon after four, and was a little time getting to sleep again. I discovered the reason when I was fully awake : in winding up the little French clock Robert also wound the alarm, and as the alarm was at a little after four I gather that was the reason for my being awakened.

I hired a car and drove to the studio ; it is about five miles from here, but we did it in about ten minutes ; and I met my executive. Schnitzer, who is the financial head, is a very nice, youngish, stoutish man, and they were sitting in conference when I arrived, so I saw them all together. Selznik

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is the big noise ; he is young, massive, well-educated, and with tremendous vitality. The others, whom I can't remember for the moment, were equally pleasant.

I was with them for about a quarter of an hour and then I went to see over the "lot".

I was then picked up by a man named Perry Lieber, an awfully nice fellow who is at the head of the publicity department, and he took me into the block where the executive writers are kept chained up, and I was given a room, the key thereof, and the telephone book, which helps me to get into touch with everybody in the block.

The secretarial department sent me a woman over, named Pickering, to whom I dictated a couple of letters. She also made a few notes of my requirements.

I was interviewed by Jimmy Mitchell of the *Examiner* and another reporter named Hunt. We had a grand time. I find that I have only to call up the transportation department to get a car when I want one to pick me up. It's a "swell idea".

Afterwards I saw Selznik in his office with Cooper, another member of the executive. He was the man who did "Chang" and "Four Feathers".

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They want me to do a horror picture for them. I think there is a big market for it, and they have "lined me up" all their stock artists, and I am just to use them as I want : Eric von Stroheim, Anna May Wong, and a few more of that kind.

We had an interesting talk, and he drove me back to the hotel, where he was seeing his brother.

This afternoon I am going to call on Guy Bolton for tea. The vexed problem as to whether I shall stay at the Beverly-Wilshire or whether I shall take a house has yet to be settled.

I am going to see Guy's house, and if it is "oke" I will become a householder, and the wild parties I shall give will be nobody's business ! I am determined thoroughly to demoralise Robert before I get him back. He has been out shopping this morning and getting his background, as they say in this town.

I find it so dry that my lips have to have some kind of treatment. I think the thing to get is colourless lipstick.

The sight when I woke up this morning and looked out was beautiful. Over the foreground of shops, agents' offices, and the like was the slope of the Beverly Hills lying about three miles away to the top of a ridge about the height of Glion. This is covered entirely with the white houses

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of the patrician class. When I say patrician class I mean the stars of Hollywood. The air is marvellously clear. From my room I step out on to a big patio, about as big as the little lawn by the side of Chalklands, brick-covered and furnished with chairs, couches, and what-nots. In the centre is a big fountain, which at the moment isn't playing.

I haven't gone very thoroughly into the question of how long I am staying.

Naturally, my first impression of Hollywood is a little bit confused. I am not quite satisfied that I can work in this room, and I have no place where Bob can work except here. But all this will be cleared up in a day or so. The impression I have is that they will go a long way out of their way to make things easy for me, and that they are very pleased I am here.

This is just the briefest survey of the situation up to date. I haven't been in Hollywood twenty-four hours, and to-day being Saturday rather holds me up. Maybe to-morrow I shall be able to line up a story (I hope you don't mind this language) and then you'll know roughly what it is; in fact, I'll make a point of sending you a copy of everything I do.

They go a hell of a long way to help you, and

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if you make good, as I believe I shall, you can write your own ticket. (You will have to interpret all these idioms as best you can. I don't quite know what they all mean myself.)

Selznik was telling me to-day that they had to stop work on a film because it took seventeen days to rewrite a portion of the story, and every day it cost the studio \$3,000. I believe if I get past with my quick work I shall make a lot of money, always providing they don't get scared by the very rapidity of the work and spend six months talking it over before they shoot.

I repeat that Hollywood isn't a bit like anything you imagine. I'll try to get some post-cards and send them to you. Otherwise, I'll buy a camera and take photographs.

I was photographed this morning twice at the desk, once with my feet up, telephoning, and once the conventional intense picture, writing.

The publicity man said : "I've never had anybody like you, Mr. Wallace, to deal with. You take three-quarters of my work off my shoulders." I explained to him carefully that I was not a seeker of publicity, but that when it came I thought it ought to be done properly!

He told me that I had no idea of the trouble stars gave when they arrive by train and are

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

snapped on the platform. Which is remarkable, remembering that these film stars owe a terrific lot to this kind of publicity.

The Beverly-Wilshire is famous in Los Angeles newspaper-land for the jealous care they show about protecting their guests from the Press, and you cannot get past unless the person to be interviewed is absolutely willing.

The number of my office, by the way, is 230, and my extension 246; not that I shall expect you to ring me.

Guy Bolton asked me to go to tea. Most surprisingly I went. He has a most charming house at a fairly low rent, furnished. All the ceilings are sort of vaulted. The heating is arranged by means of little buttons in the wall which put on tiny lights to show you what sort of heating you are getting.

I met Charles Farrell and his wife, Virginia Valli. They were very charming, and, to my amazement, fans. So was another woman, who is somebody else in the films—not anybody in particular. We had a grand talk, and I got home for dinner in no particular mood for work.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

Sunday, 6th December, 1931.

We have got another gorgeous day. I spent the morning thinking out a story for R.K.O. on the lines Selznik suggested. I am sending you a copy by this mail.

I am quite prepared, of course, to find that it is not quite the thing they want. I want to get through this engagement without any shocks to my vanity, and there is really no reason why I should have such shocks, for usually these people have a pretty definite idea of their market. What he wanted me to do was a horror film, that is to say, something that makes people grasp their immediate neighbour or the sweaty hand of their lady friend ; and I think I can get a horror atmosphere in broad daylight. That, to my mind, is the best kind of thrill.

I started work in the afternoon, with intervals for tea and dinner, and the story was finished and typed by half-past ten, which was a great achievement both for the senior and junior partners. There must have been ten thousand words.

It is wonderful to stand on the patio and watch the cars flying along the Wilshire Boulevard. The amazing thing about this place is that twenty

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minutes from here is the Pacific and the beaches, and that about an hour and a half away you are up to your thighs in snow, so that you can go skiing or bathing as the fancy takes you. By the evening it was quite cloudy but really warm.

IN BEVERLY HILLS

IN BEVERLY HILLS

Monday, 7th December, 1931.

EITHER I or Robert forgot to pull up the windows of my bedroom, and I woke this morning with a thick head. It is a lovely morning, though there are just a few clouds in the sky. I am just off to the studio to have a look round and deliver my goods.

Be careful when you are wiring to tell me where you'll be at week-ends in case I want to get at you.

By the way, I am a persistent yeast fiend, and I have found it very beneficial.

You have no conception of the mildness of the air, and if we come out next year you and the children are going thoroughly to enjoy the experience.

I shall be calling you on the phone one night this week.

Monday night.

I went down to the studio at ten and saw Cooper, who read the story and liked it very much, but thought there was not sufficient horror in it.

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I met Brenon, who directed "Beau Geste", and who has been allocated to my story, and I met also one or two other experts of the executive.

I think the story I gave them was a very good one, but I am not so sure that they will accept it.

I had another idea at lunch, which I gave them ; a mystery play called "A Hundred Minutes", the idea being that the whole of the action should correspond in point of time to the period of its showing, that is to say, it opens at twelve and finishes at twenty minutes to two, and within that period all the action is compressed. They jumped at the idea.

I haven't written the story yet.

It is a hell of a journey from here to the studios, about five miles, and costs you about a pound a day in taxis—at least.

Tuesday morning, 8th December, 1931.

I am ashamed to confess it for Hollywood's sake, but it is raining. It is an outrageous thing to have happened, but there it is : it is raining, not like hell, but quite like London, and the Beverly Hills are hidden in clouds. It makes no difference to the habits of the inhabitants, because they wear the same motor-cars summer or winter.



[General Photographic Agency

THE FAMOUS NOVELIST AT BEVERLY HILLS

Dictating to his secretary, Mr. Robert Curtis, who is frequently mentioned in these letters

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I have had Cooper, one of the executive, come down to talk over stories, and I am giving my story a new end, which I think will make it acceptable. I am also doing a radio mystery and another mystery story, and a story of prehistoric life! So it looks like being a happy Christmas for me.

I am going to make a habit of sending off this diary every second day, and I am also sending you the story without the change of end.

It is curious what a depressing effect the change of weather has. I haven't gone to the studio to-day. I have a number of articles to write, though I don't feel quite like writing them.

I shall probably move into a little house, but I have no news yet concerning one. I hope in my next letter to give you more definite information. The trouble is that the best houses are all about five miles from the studios.

The Beverly-Wilshire people are most anxious that I should stay here, and will do anything to keep me. The trouble is that, although I am comfortable, I am not homely, and I have nowhere to lay my pen, so to speak.

PREPARING TO SET UP HOUSE

PREPARING TO SET UP HOUSE

Wednesday morning, 9th December.

THE rain finished last night, and this morning we have blue skies and perfect sunshine. Bob and I went to see "The Champ" last night, with Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper. It really was a perfect picture and perfectly acted, and I hope you will see it in town. I haven't seen a picture that impressed me so. Everybody in the audience was weeping at the finish, including me!

I am going down to the studio this morning and taking Bob with me. I think I told you that I have got four pictures on hand, and it is very discouraging after seeing last night's show. But that, I think, is always the case when one sees an emotional picture.

Cooper and Brenon will be my directors. Cooper did "Chang" and "Four Feathers", and for him I am doing the prehistoric animals story. Brenon, of course, did "Beau Geste" and two of Barrie's and "Sorrell and Son". I am hoping that at least one of these pictures will be done before I come home, which will be either in February or March.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I have heard of a place at what is known as the Ronda—little houses round a courtyard—and Guy Bolton's friend is going to see one for me to-day.

You will be interested to learn that right opposite to the hotel is a delightful little restaurant called the Brown Derby. I went there last night and had pancakes and coffee; it is open day and night, and has the most lovely girl attendants you could wish to see.

Virginia Bedford has just rung me up to say that the Ronda want six months' lease. She is seeing three houses this morning and will call me back at 2.30 so I will probably have some news for you later in the day.

You realise, of course, that although I describe myself as being in Hollywood, we are not in Hollywood at all, but in Beverly Hills.

To understand what the place looks like you have got to suppose that Beverly Hills proper are the hills of Bourne End, the town running somewhere about the other side of the river, a continuous street that reaches to Maidenhead, which is Hollywood. Somewhere about Slough is the beginning of Los Angeles, which continues to Hounslow. At Marlow is Culver City. Between Marlow and Henley is the sea, which I have not yet inspected, let alone approved. So that when

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I talk about going into Hollywood I really mean a Sabbath day's journey.

My studio is about as far from this hotel as Bray is from Chalklands. We call it all Hollywood almost as far as Culver City. The hotel is about the same distance from the hills as Chalklands is from the hills on the other side of the river.

If you can imagine a long street running along on the other side of the river, packed tight with neon signs as far as the eye can reach, you will have some idea of relative distances ; and if you can suppose the whole of the hill on which Chalklands stands being dotted with white villas and beautiful houses, you can almost visualise what Beverly Hills looks like. By night it is sprinkled with lights, and very pretty.

I think I have got my house ; I am going to see it this afternoon. Virginia Bedford phoned me and said it is a beautiful house and she is getting it for \$350 a month, completely furnished. Roughly, that is £25 a week at the present rate of exchange.

I am wondering, if I stay on in February, whether it would be possible for you to come out and return home with me. I thought you might come out in January straight away from Caux, catching the boat at Cherbourg.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

Long before you receive this I shall have notified you by wire just how everything is going. The point against the scheme is that you would want to see the play produced and on its legs before you came out. Everything really depends on what date you will put on the play, which I am sending to Carl Brandt to-morrow in its finished form.

Don't for one moment think that I have set my heart on your doing something wild and eccentric, but I know travelling doesn't bother you, and that the real consideration will be Penny and how she is likely to be in Caux. The grandest thing would be if you could bring her, but I know that is impossible. It would mean, roughly, 18 days' travel and about three weeks here, or roughly two months. You might not think it worth while, but the real consideration will be its practicability, I know.

Thursday morning, 10th December, 1931.

Last night we went down to the studio to see "Dracula" run through, and I also saw a bit of "Bulldog Drummond", because Selznik wanted me to see a man in it.

"Dracula" is crude horror stuff, but I must say it raised my hair a little bit.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

My new address is 716, North Maple Drive, Beverly Hills. For Heaven's sake don't say Hollywood when you mean Beverly Hills. It's not done, and such a pained expression comes over the Beverly Hillers when you refer to it as Hollywood.

It is really in a lovely road, and a lovely house with a high-roofed sitting-room which will be my writing-room. Unlike other houses, it is two-storeyed. I move in on Sunday the 13th (as you know, my lucky day). I shall be glad to get in, because I can't do much work at the hotel.

To-day I am getting my telegraphic address and I shall probably cable you that to Kingsgate with the other address. Thank you for the Yeoman House address.

There were three sets of clouds in the sky yesterday, quite visible and distinct, but apparently they were lying over Mount Baldy and some other mountain the name of which I don't know. The rest of the sky was blue and the sunshine was incessant. To-day there is still a sign of cloud hanging about in the north.

Everything is green, and there are plenty of flowers about, but the real flowers will not be out for another month, though there are sheaves of roses almost everywhere.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I have even got a bootlegger to supply me with a case of whisky and a case of gin for my guests. Robert will be so happy that he can make cocktails.

You can buy real orange juice here, already squeezed, for 20 cents a quart, and oranges about five a penny. Living here is extraordinarily cheap, except in the matter of clothes.

I have hired a motor-car—2,000 miles for \$500 a month. I am going to see how it works out. We have a garage establishment, and the hire, of course, includes everything—petrol, chauffeur, etc., and for that I am getting a wonderful car.

I am not going to the studio till two o'clock to-day.

I MEET FRIENDS



I MEET FRIENDS

Thursday evening, 10th December, 1931.

AT the moment we are looking for actors, and this afternoon I went down to the studio to lunch. My lunch consisted of a large glass of orange juice and a hot beef sandwich, which is two slices of roast beef between bread and butter covered with gravy.

Afterwards I went into the private projection room and saw "Murder by the Clock". There were moments in it which were quite creepy, and the actor was the very man I wanted for my horror story, which I have changed. (You have the manuscript and I will be able to send you on the changes.)

I met a very rising young film actor, whose name I can't for the moment remember. I also bumped into Richard Dix the other day. I am simply surrounded by stars at Maple Drive, including Mr. Gleeson—you remember "Is Zat So?"—who lives just opposite, and a big director who lives next door to me.

Miss Bedford has been terribly kind. She got the house, she has arranged the telephone and the

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

water supply, and, in fact, has been a mother to me. She told me it was the maternal instinct working, so that's how I put it.

As soon as I have got the sailings from New York I will regularise my postings. For the moment I am just chancing it. I gather I can send this up till Saturday night and it will get to you by Wednesday week, but I may be wrong.

I am working on the play to-night and getting it off, but here again I am at some disadvantage, because it will not arrive in New York before Sunday. Still, I will get Carl to rush it out.

Bob has suggested I should send the play direct to London and let the new bits be put in there under your supervision, and I think this is a better idea than sending them to Carl. I might get this in the ordinary post and not air mail by to-morrow.

Friday morning, 11th December, 1931.

It rained all night, and it is very cloudy this morning, though there are flashes of sunshine; it was so warm in the night that I had to get up and take off a blanket, and none of us slept particularly well.

I am lecturing this afternoon to the Junior



[Producers' Distributing Co.]
CONSTANCE BENNETT



[Archibald Haddon]
HEATHER THATCHER
WHO "SENT ME AN ECSTATIC WIRE,"

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

College of the University of Southern California on journalism. As far as my work is concerned, I don't think I shall be able to do very much until I get into the house. I am very glad we are going on Saturday. I have taken it for three months. I am going to try to call you up at ten o'clock on Christmas morning in Caux, which means calling you at midnight Christmas Eve here, as there will be ten hours difference.

When the weather is bad here, one easily gets tired. The sunshine is our vitaliser.

I am becoming quite a picture fan in these days, and any picture I want to see they put on in the projection room, to give me a chance really of seeing the actors. Did I mention the fact that I have seen a bit of "Bulldog Drummond"?

Last night I went to cocktails and dinner with Guy Bolton. I didn't drink much cocktail. Auriole Lee and John van Druten turned up, and a dozen other people whom I can't remember. There were four of us to dinner, and I came home at about eleven o'clock.

We have got into the habit of going to the Brown Derby, which is a little restaurant right opposite the Beverly-Wilshire, an all-night place, and having coffee and pancakes. I am not so sure that they help one to sleep.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

It blew a gale in the night and must have rained a lot, but this morning we have the old blue sky and sunshine, though the wind is pretty fierce. Apparently this is very unusual weather; the wind and the rain are supposed to last about three days, when it comes at all. I am hoping it will blow itself out.

I am moving into my house this afternoon, and I have telegraphed to you the address and the cable address. I thought "Dramisto Beverly Hills" was a good touch and easy to remember.

To-night and to-morrow I am working on a story.

Yesterday I went to the Junior College of the California University and lectured on journalism to about a hundred young people.

We had tea afterwards, and I saw their plant. They get out a newspaper twice a week, and a very effective production it is.

For two days I shall be faced with the horrors of housekeeping in my new home, but on Monday I get a coloured servant in who will look after that end. I think Robert will be very useful.

HOUSE-WARMING

HOUSE-WARMING

Saturday night, 12th December, 1931.

AFTER I finished the previous lines of the diary I went down to the studio, attended to one or two calls, lunched with Cooper in the restaurant, and collected the photographs which had been taken of me, and which you will have received by now, or probably at the same time as this reaches you.

I then went to see him taking one of these process shots. The camera shoots against a blue background lit up by about fifty orange arc lamps. It was two men making an attack upon a pre-historic beast. The beast, of course, was not there: he is put in afterwards, and every movement of the men is controlled by a man who is seeing the beast through a moviola, that is to say the film of the beast, and signals by means of a bell every movement that the men make. It is called the Dunning process, with which Bryan will be familiar.

I then came home to my new home, and found the owner of the house, Mrs. Cook, in a great state, because she had a bad cold and was not out of the

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

house as soon as she had expected, and was very anxious to leave everything speckless.

I borrowed a big table from the studio, and had it put in the living-room. One day next week I'll get the studio people to send a man up here and take a few shots so that you can see what the place is like.

My first step, the evening being chilly, was to light the log fire. Underneath the grid where the logs lie is a gas pipe ; you light this, and that of itself is very cheerful ; flaming white gas jets go half-way up the fireplace. In about ten minutes the logs are alight, and you turn off the gas. The logs are still burning, by the way.

Guy Bolton and Virginia Bedford came. Virginia brought me some flowers and put the finishing touches on my household organisation, ordering me grub for to-morrow and deciding that I can only have meat once a day.

Robert has risen to the occasion nobly. He has found an ironing board, cunningly let into the wall and apparently a long cupboard until you open it and pull the board down. He is making me cups of tea every few minutes.

The Dictaphones came, but without the flexes. They will be all right on Monday.

I am giving a dinner to Guy Bolton, Virginia,

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and somebody else on Tuesday in return for their hospitality, and I sent Virginia some flowers. By the way, round about tea came another lot of flowers—roses and violets—from the local florist! I enclose the card.

Though I am pretty tired to-night and shan't do a great deal of work, I can see myself getting into it to-morrow, and Bob and I have promised ourselves a great day. We are going to work on another horror story, which I think will get past.

After all, I have only been here a week, and usually it takes six or seven weeks to do a story, sometimes more than that. Once I get into my stride there will be no difficulty at all about keeping this studio supplied with filmable material. This time I am not going to do the treatment. It will be just as easy to write the story.

I am going to try to collect the stories of Hollywood. They are really remarkable. One of the executives found a cowboy at a local rodeo, doing wonderful rope tricks. He was a tall, handsome fellow, and the director said at once: "This is star material."

He gave the man a contract and put him in a film. He was a handsome-looking fellow except that he had bad teeth, so they set him up with a new set of teeth at a cost of \$600.

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On the third day of the picture he came to the director and said : "Say, couldn't somebody else double for me in the love-making scenes, and let me do the roping?"

Eventually he was so rotten that they got rid of him, and after he'd been paid off the chief of the staff, in the midst of a conference, said : "Great heaven, he's got our teeth !"

Orders were sent to intercept him and get the teeth back, but apparently it didn't work.

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Guy and Virginia stayed till about five o'clock. I went out to see them into their car. It was a most wonderful sight—a most gorgeous orange sunset behind the houses on the opposite side of the street—in one of which, by the way, lives the author of "Fata Morgana". Down to the left you could see the great spread of lights of Hollywood. I never saw anything more lovely.

There are oranges growing in my garden, and four precious—I forget the name of them : you have them in salad ; they are a kind of apple. Anyway, they only bloom once in five years, and

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the only regret the owner had was that they were almost ripe and she was leaving them.

There are narcissi growing, and a few other flowers, and there is a bush or two of blue plumbago. In the centre of the garden is a lily pond with a tiny fountain. Altogether it is a swell house.

My only trouble is that I am eating too much, but that's going to stop, and I am going to eat no meat until the evening meal, and possibly not then.

We dined at the Brown Derby, to Robert's disappointment, for he had prepared us quite a *recherché* meal. It is now 8.15 and we are thinking of going to bed—at least, in a couple of hours' time—and start our work in earnest to-morrow morning.

I shall have to get another standard lamp for this big room, which is a little bigger than my study at Chalklands [Mr. Wallace's country house]. I am not encouraging anybody to come here, and I hope to do a tremendous lot of work.

It will be a great joy in getting up in the morning to have Robert around to make me some tea. At the moment there is no communication with his room, which is called the maid's room and is slightly separated from the house, and has its

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own private bathroom. I tell you, we look after our servants in California.

It looks like being a lovely day to-morrow. The wind has dropped, and the sky is cloudless. I saw old Baldy to-day. He stands 14,000 feet above sea level, and is covered with snow. Incidentally, he is 70 miles away on an air line.

I haven't yet decided whether I will call you up on Christmas Day or New Year's Eve.

What I like about this house is that there are plenty of books and a jolly, homely, comfortable feeling about it. It is terribly quiet; there are no cars galloping along the "Bullyvard", no neon lights—nothing. I expect I shall have had enough of it by the end of my three months, supposing I stay three months. It certainly makes the return to Hollywood a very pleasant prospect.

Approached by night, it is a beautiful-looking place, with a sort of stained-glass window and a yellow iron lamp fixed to the wall, and a crazy pavement with grass growing between.

Virginia has fixed me up a Japanese gardener and a black cook, who, I presume, will arrive in her own car, and Bob has dealt with all the tradesmen.



[Exclusive News Agency

THE FAMOUS "BROWN DERBY" RESTAURANT AT HOLLYWOOD
(THE AMERICAN EQUIVALENT OF THE ENGLISH BOWLER HAT) OFTEN FREQUENTED BY
EDGAR WALLACE DURING HIS VISIT

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

Sunday morning, 13th December, 1931.

My first night in the new home was a very comfortable one. I slept very well. Everything is so dainty, and the sheets and linen generally are of such excellent quality. Robert brought me up my tea at a quarter to seven. I don't think he went to bed very much, he was so thrilled with his new opportunity.

This morning, however, there was nearly a tragedy. We ran out of milk! We telephoned frantically to our friend and saviour, Guy Bolton, who turned up in a golf suit with a bottle of milk under each arm, having motored round from North Camden. It is about six blocks away.

I went out in the garden and had a look at it. There are two big orange trees, if not three, in full fruit. There is even a pomegranate tree, a lemon tree, but I could not find the avocado pears or apples or whatever they are. There are quite a number of flowers growing, including a brilliant six-starred flower the blooms of which are about nine inches across.

Having only got meat for one meal, the new cook decided to give us salad and a strange omelette for lunch. It was quite good. The new cook is about thirty-five, stoutish, coloured, and

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her name is Marie. She has large ivory earrings and a pleasant smile.

It was a most gorgeous sunrise, but it clouded up in the morning. Bob says it was a glorious sunset, but I was asleep. I have been working to-day at the new film, and have done twenty-seven pages of it. I hope to get the back of it broken to-night.

WORK ON FIRST FILM PLAY

WORK ON FIRST FILM PLAY

Monday, 14th December, 1931.

BOB and I worked on the new story till quite late last night, and started again early this morning. One or two little bits of furniture have come up, including a writing chair which is very swell and has been lent me by the studio. It looks like a million dollars.

This afternoon your mail came. I am wiring you to-night.

(Between this and the last sentence the wire has gone.)

It was terribly nice to hear all about Gerald [Sir Gerald du Maurier]. That's going to be a picture and a half.

We have been working, as I say, steadily through the day. Bob has been doing the working. I've been doing the thinking. We are getting out a real scenario and continuity, a copy of which will be mailed to you.

I don't know how long you are staying in Caux. I'll find that out by wire. It's glorious news about Penny.

I'll be glad to get my first film play under way.

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It will give me a little more confidence. It was not as easy to do as it looks, and I don't think it can be done in a terrific hurry, though I am doing it faster than anybody else.

It's been raining like hell all day—the fag end of an Alaskan storm which has swept down through Oregon and Northern California. The weather prophecy, which is very good here, says that we shall have a clearing up to-morrow, and really it is rather desirable. One thing you don't want in Southern California is a good old English pea-soup rain, and that is what we've been getting.

I am going to settle down steadily to work now I have got this house. I find work is quite possible. I may go down for a couple of hours to the studio and sit in at conferences.

Cooper is coming up to see me to-night—in fact, in ten minutes' time, and his arrival will probably interrupt this letter. As soon as I can get this story through I can turn my attention to other matters of equal moment, such as putting in a little sentiment between the girl and the detective.

Tuesday, 15th December, 1931.

Last night I had a frantic wire from Carl about the story, and I sent a wire to you asking you to

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get them to hold up the story at home. Apparently you've been successful, for they're holding it up, thank Heaven !

This morning I was on the phone to New York, talking to Carl. It is marvellous how quickly you get on ; it took exactly four minutes for Bob to get through from here to Collier's office, and it was as clear as the proverbial speaking in the next room.

I don't want to come back to the subject of your coming out, if I go the full length of time, but I'd like you to tell me about this. I know you will discuss it quite calmly, because it is not a question of raising or dashing my hopes. I want you here tremendously, but I don't want to be stupid about it, and if you are going to worry about leaving Penny, then I'd rather you didn't come. What is going to influence you too, I know, will be the play.

Please get out of your mind the idea that at the back of mine is a fretful desire to get you out at all costs and all hazards. Naturally I want you out here all the time, but round about February I shall be thinking about heading for home, and if I make good here, I can come home just when I like, and probably I shall come home earlier than the four months if you are not here. In that case the trip might not be worth your while.

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All this is very confused and illogical, and you have got to regard this part of the letter as if I were thinking aloud and speculating upon all kinds of possibilities.

I have got a tremendous lot of work to do, and I shall be pretty busy right through Christmas, so don't have any sad views about my being all alone.

Wednesday, 16th December, 1931.

Last evening Cooper came up from the studios and read my scenario, which he liked. Guy Bolton and Virginia Bedford came to dinner. We had really a nice dinner, with a good soup, duckling, green peas, asparagus, and ice cream. They stayed till about ten. Most people go home about that time, except the very riotous ones.

It is a warm day, and I went out to lunch with them at the Embassy, which is on Hollywood Boulevard. To get there one goes along the Sunset Boulevard, which is perhaps the most gorgeous thoroughfare in the world, for it gives you a view right across the city of Los Angeles to the mountains.

The houses here are really lovely. I am looking round for one to suit us when we both come

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out here with the family. There is a wonderful sun and it's warm, and the poinsettias are a blaze of colour in all the gardens. Nobody would dream it was the week before Christmas. In fact, if it wasn't for the risk of getting a cold I'd be sitting in my shirt sleeves dictating this.

It must sound funny to you when I talk about going into Hollywood, but really Hollywood is as far from here as Maidenhead is from Bourne End.

It is odd to believe that within a week we shall have Christmas. We have arranged to have a small turkey, and a wreath of holly hanging on our front door. In fact we are going all American.

They rang me up this morning from the studios and asked me what I was doing, and I told them that I was not going to do any more than one story a week, which has become a game of mine.

Oh, by the way, Collier's want to start right away with a series of Sanders stories. They may be worth doing, and they are certainly amusing to do and profitable. So I can see nothing for me but a — lot of work.

All this immorality of Hollywood is bunk.

I am glad you liked the second instalment of my diary. That must have been the one I posted in New York. They will come to you continuously now, except for the bad sailings, and

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all the letters I send will come by air mail. In fact, all the mail to New York goes that way. It gets through in about twenty-four hours.

I am sleeping very well. I met Bayard Veiller here. He wants me to go out to dinner one day this week at his home. I am dining out on Saturday somewhere, and I am going to a sort of dinner and party.

All the windows here have fly screens : they are like blinds ; you pull them down. It is a most excellent idea. They run down in a groove, and you fasten them at the bottom. I am going to find out how much they cost and how they are fixed, and have them fixed at Chalklands. They roll up on a spring roller. In spite of which a number of flies have got into our room, causing us great mental strain, but I think we have killed most of them.

I tell you these little things because little things are interesting.

HOLLYWOOD PREPARES FOR CHRISTMAS

HOLLYWOOD PREPARES FOR CHRISTMAS

Thursday, 17th December, 1931.

WE all went to bed early last night—10 o'clock—and Robert called me at six.

You have no conception of what sunrises are like in California. When I looked out of my window this morning I saw a sky of beautiful deep red and orange, although it was still darkish. It rises behind the Beverly Hills somewhere. It is grand then to look through the front windows and watch all these white houses in North Map Drive turn crimson and yellow, and, of course, the air is glorious. You'd never dream it was winter. My gladioli have kept a week.

To-day is our washing-day. We don't send our stuff to the hand laundry, but have an electric boiler and washer, and a coloured lady comes and does it. It is dried on a vulgar line, but out of sight and among the orange trees.

I aim to write the story that I did for my second picture, "The Death Watch". These stories are always rather difficult to begin. As soon as I get going I will go ahead like a house afire. I have done my two articles for London.

I will send you with this a list of the dates on

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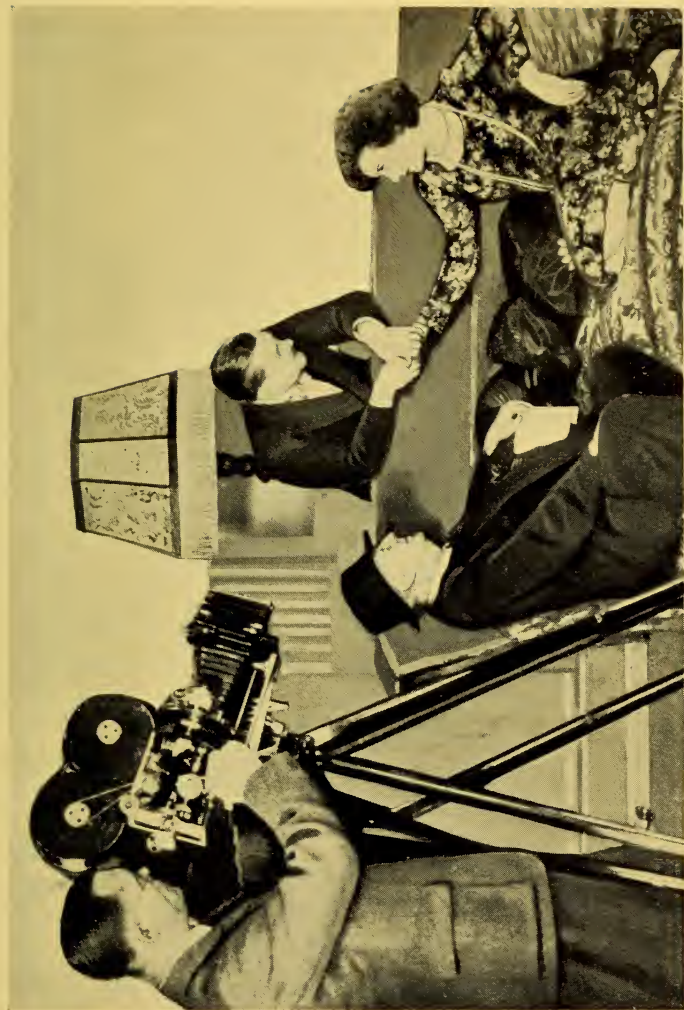
which you may expect mail. I am referring, of course, to England and not to Caux, whither I am sending this. All letters after this and the next will be sent to England. You will get this about January 3, and the next one should arrive in Caux in two days' time.

Most packages will be labelled the ship they are to go by. Our secretariat is methodical!

It is the practice out here to decorate the trees in front of the houses—if possible, a fir tree—at Christmas. The chairman of our Chamber of Commerce, Miss Mary Pickford, about whom you may have read, has ordered that we shall be illuminated on Friday night.

To-day the electrician is coming to decorate one of my two trees with pretty little lights. It will be lovely in Beverly Hills throughout next week. Given a full moon, which we shall have, and perfect weather, which is almost certain, and the lights of Los Angeles below us, which is Montreux multiplied ten thousand times, it will be a wonderful spectacle.

I went into the Hollywood Book Store and was recognised without my cigarette. I bought some stationery and a lot of other things, including the gaily decorated envelopes of which you may have a sample. I also bought myself a new hat.



[Producers' Distributing Co.]

EDGAR WALLACE DIRECTING NIGEL BRUCE, THE ACTOR

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I put into circulation a little wise-crack of mine. When the executive told me that the story I wrote last Sunday was a good one but not a great one, I replied : "I never write great stories ; I only write best-sellers". That, I think, will get around. As I say, we don't ask for publicity, but when it's there we get it !

I got back to lunch and was deciding to go to bed when a phone call came through from Selznick, the production manager, and I slipped down and had a conference with Selznick and Cooper about material for Constance Bennett. I think I know the story I shall write. Cooper and I went over to stage No. 10 and saw them shooting a bit of a scene of "Girl Crazy", which, by the way, Guy Bolton wrote. It is a musical.

I get on terribly well with these executive people, and I believe they are awfully pleased with me. If I get this big story over it will be grand. Selznick said : "If I can get two big stories from you in the four months you are here I'll be d——d lucky."

Do you know, I have an idea that I may make my hit out of stories that aren't criminal at all. I have always had that feeling since I left England. That would be grand.

I had a cable from Sam saying that "The Old

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Man" went over big. I have not heard from Pat, I should like to know what she is doing. I had a wire from Bryan, and he seems busy. As a matter of fact, it is a good thing he didn't come out, because, with all this retrenchment going on, it is terribly difficult to find jobs for people. They even put off stenographers for two or three days at a time, which seems to me to be wicked.

I am going down to the studio to-night to see a Constance Bennett film. You have no idea of the number of films I am seeing nowadays, but it's all in a good cause.

We have just negotiated for a 15-ft. Christmas tree to plant in our front garden, or, rather, on the lawn which separates the sidewalk from the house, and to-morrow the electrician is coming up to decorate it with lights. The other trees were not practicable. I will get a photograph of it when it is up ; it will amuse Penny.

Friday, 18th December, 1931.

In order that I should see Constance Bennett I went down last night to the studio and saw a run through of a picture in which Richard Barthelmess and she appeared, she as a minor character.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

It was called "A Son of the Gods". I like Constance Bennett; I think she can act, and I think I have got quite a good story for her.

It was overcast when I woke up this morning, but has developed into a perfectly blue sky and a perfectly warm day—in fact, so warm that I have had to turn off the heater.

Our Christmas tree has arrived; it is 15-ft. high and stands outside my window on the lawn, visible to the populace. We have dug out a lot of electric light bulbs, evidently used for this sort of thing before, and I have supplemented these with a new string. The problem that Robert and I and Bob had to decide was whether we would have an illuminated star at the top, for an illuminated star costs \$3, but, as Robert said, all the best Christmas trees have these, and as ours is going to be one of the best Christmas trees I have gone the whole hog and bought the star. Anyway it will do for next year.

I have had an invitation to go out for Christmas, and Mark [Ostrer] and Karen [Ostrer] wired to Walter Huston, who called me up to-day and asked me to go to dinner with him on Sunday. As I want Sunday for myself I told him I couldn't go, and I am lunching with him at the Colonial House next week some time. I am dining

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to-morrow night, as I told you, with somebody whose name I have never heard and have now forgotten. John Balderton will be there.

By the way, when I opened my account at the Security First National Bank yesterday, the lady who shoots the works asked me where I was working, and I told her on the R.K.O. lot, and she said : "Oh, yes, an actor?" I didn't say "Actor, be —— !" but I looked and felt it. To think I've come all this —— distance to be called an actor !

As I say, the idea of the Constance Bennett film appeals to me very much indeed. I am really thinking of it when I ought to be thinking of the work immediately to hand.

I had a letter from Bryan this morning. By the way it came marked "Air Mail intransit America", and if you can send your letters the same way I wish you would. You might make inquiries about it.

Sunday, 20th December, 1931.

In the evening I went to a party. I don't know the name of my host, but he's the man who produced "Outward Bound", a Russian, rather bored, with bright red hair and side whiskers. I met

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

John Balderton and Alice Joyce, a lovely woman, with a girl of sixteen.

It is amazing the number of people one meets who have read every book one has written. The food was cooked by a Chinese, and it was Chinese. I got through it all right without making a scene. I left at half-past eleven.

This morning I had your cable saying that everything was O.K. and that you had received my letters. I got out all my Christmas wires for home, and that was something attempted, something done.

To-day I am working on the scenario for Constance Bennett, and am approaching it a little gingerly, because I want it to be terribly good, which means that a lot of it will have to be rewritten and then rewritten.

When I got up this morning there was a fog, a white fog, that blotted out almost everything, and it is still grey and dull. From information received Robert thinks it is going to be a very hot day. Bob thinks it will rain.

In this room there is a big open fireplace, and we burn logs all the time, and it is very jolly. There is a huge fire blazing now, with three immense logs going merrily.

The story I am attempting for Constance

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

Bennett is something entirely different from anything I have tried. That is why I am approaching it with such care.

I dreamed last night that Steve Donoghue was dead. Is this a sign that Michael Beary is coming out? As a matter of fact, I never expected he would.

If I can make some big and easy money here I should certainly buy a house. There are some beautiful places in the market, and even if one didn't live here it would be a good investment with the property market at its present low level.

I am still sleeping remarkably well, and though I had a little chest, due to going out in the cold when I was hot, that has practically passed off.

I think that R.K.O. want me to direct some picture, which I should very much like to do.

I did not send you on the scenario of "The Death Watch" because I didn't feel it was worth while to send you anything until I'd got something they were really enthusiastic about. I am keeping a copy, however, and you will see it when I come home.

We are getting quite Christmassy: there is a decorated tree in front of almost every home. One day next week I will have my holly wreath hanging

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

on my front door. The studio are going to send up a photographer and take pictures, and I will let you have these as soon as they are available.

Monday, 21st December, 1931.

The fog turned to rain ; for some reason or other I had a very uncomfortable night's sleep, probably due to the fact that I slept in the afternoon, but I rather fancy I might have eaten something that didn't quite agree with me, though I have had no pain.

The rain has continued all day, and probably that has got something to do with my slackness.

Our Christmas tree blew down to-day, but has since been re-erected. We looked rather foolish for about half an hour, but the *status quo ante* has now been restored.

Michael [his son] will be home to-day, and I suppose to-morrow will be rather a hectic rush to get ready for Caux. I am sending off my Christmas wires to-morrow evening and you will get yours in Switzerland.

There is nothing new to report. I am going round to Guy Bolton's on Christmas Day for a cocktail, but I simply dare not pledge myself for

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

the evening ; there is so much work to be done, and somehow I shall rather like Christmas dinner with the people I know. I must say it doesn't seem a bit like Christmas, but then, it never does.

The scenario is making steady progress. I am rather pleased with it. If I'd had any sense I'd have worked at it to-day instead of letting myself loaf.

I am anxious to get these stories finished and get out in the evenings and see some pictures. M.G.M. are opening on Christmas Day with a new Wallace Beery picture, "Hell's Divers". It will have to go some to beat "The Champ", but I don't want to have my feelings harrowed any more by Mr. Jackie Cooper unless he appears in something cheerful.

I am closing now to catch the mail, the "Aquitania", but I will probably be able to give you another letter almost as soon, because one of the German boats leaves two days later.

Tuesday, 22nd December, 1931.

I worked till quite late last night and was up early this morning. I have promised to do the scenario for the new story for Cooper by 12 o'clock

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to-morrow, and only a bit of it is done. As I have told you, we did a little on Sunday night.

I had a letter from you to-day, and was very pleased to get it.

The weather is very dull, and there will probably be rain for three days. I had several Christmas greetings, including one from Yorke Scarlett. It was signed "Youke", but I presume, as it was sent from High Wycombe, that Yorke was meant. At any rate he got full marks for it. I have also had a wire from you telling me you are leaving for Caux.

I have written to Penny, but will you especially thank her for the letter she sent. It was a grand bit of typing. She is evidently in the best of spirits, and I hope the progress she has made is going to continue. In fact, I feel almost sure that it will.

My ambition, which may not be realised, is that the film I have made, roughly designed for Constance Bennett, will be directed by me. There is a possibility, of course, that as she is such an important and expensive star they may choose one of the better-known directors. But that's my secret ambition, and I whisper it into your ear so that I may have all the sympathy if it doesn't come off.

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Wednesday, 23rd December, 1931.

I am dictating this at a quarter to five, which is a quarter to two in the morning in France and a quarter to three in Switzerland. By the time I am having dinner to-night at eight o'clock you will have left Vallorb, and before I go to bed you will be in Caux. We almost finished the scenario last night and quite finished it this morning. When you remember that I've had to do a "short" and 20,000 words of a new story and a new scenario, and that it's all been done in six days, you will realise that we've been going some.

I took the scenario down to the studio, where I was interviewed by the "Variety" correspondent, a decent fellow called Fred Stanley, and, having handed the story over to Cooper, I met him an hour later at lunch in the restaurant. There was a little bit about a missionary which he didn't think might get past the Will Hays office, but Cooper said it was the most powerful story of mine he had read.

I then went down to the animating room, where they are working on models of a prehistoric story, the script of which I am going to write.

MY CHRISTMAS IN HOLLYWOOD

MY CHRISTMAS IN HOLLYWOOD

Thursday morning, 24th December, 1931.

I DID no work last night. Bob and I went down to the Brown Derby and had some coffee. It was very beautiful to see the illuminated Christmas trees. As I think I explained to you, they decorate not special Christmas trees but fir trees that are already growing in front of the houses. Some of them are thirty feet high, and they look wonderful with thousands of lights on them.

Where they haven't trees they decorate their windows or balconies or porches, and there was quite a procession of cars from Los Angeles moving slowly down the road, evidently doing all the drives and admiring the trees. There was also a group of Christmas carollers, and to-night ten thousand of them are going out to sing, in small parties. I didn't hear my young friend "Noel, Noel", but he may appear to-night.

This morning I got your wire, and at about 8.45 put through a call to you being quite under the impression it was Christmas Day. It was not until after the call went that I realised I had slipped a cog. Exactly half an hour after, the

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good ; the food she prepares is so wonderful that I simply can't refuse it ; but I am limiting my breakfast. This morning's was a typical one : prunes and a few slices of bacon.

Last night, just as I was going off to sleep, I heard two unmistakable shots. They were fired at intervals, and obviously from an automatic. I could hear the whistle of the bullet plainly. I don't know what happened around here last night, but we shall probably see in the evening newspaper.

I am devoting to-day to sentimentalising "The Frightened Lady" and an article.

By the way, a lot of air mails are suspended, and the mails are going on by train.

Our oranges are getting ripe ; in fact, we have had some for the table. Fifty-six car loads of oranges left Los Angeles yesterday, and that is a pretty average day's shipment. When I say Los Angeles, I mean, of course, Southern California and all the stations up to Summit, though I shouldn't imagine there's many oranges growing around Summit.

From now onwards I am keeping a copy of this diary in case of air mail crashes. You'll be amused to know that I am sending one of the publicity men at R.K.O. a Christmas present in the shape

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of—a bottle of whisky. I've still got eleven bottles left, and as I never ask anybody who calls to have a drink, it looks as though they'll last for the whole trip.

I had a letter from Carl Brandt, marked grandly "Air Mail", but sent by ordinary mail, telling me to go ahead with another story for the American Magazine (or, rather, to go ahead with a synopsis). Colliers also want some Sanders stories, which, I think, I told you, and I am shooting in one soon. The beauty of this work is that you can write a scenario and put your best into it, and you have a story, rather the guts of a story, for serial and book publication. I can go on doing this for a very long time, and of course, I am working under ideal conditions in this delightful, lofty sitting-room. It is not magnificently furnished, but it is terribly pleasant. I am having the photographers up and they are going to give me some snaps.

I shall send this instalment of the diary off to-day. By the way, I had a wire from Michael Beary saying he left in the "Majestic". I am afraid I shan't be able to put him up at 716, but I will take a suite for him at the Beverly-Wilshire. He'll be here a fortnight. I never dreamed he would come at all. I also had a wire from Bill Linnit [S. E. Linnit, manager of Wyndham's

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Theatre], thanking me for my delightful present. A third wire came from Julian Andrews on behalf of the staff, very expensively sent at full rates.

Later.

I drove round to the M.G.M. lot and met one of the executives, Mannix. They are all very nice. I lunched with Bayard Veiller.

The M.G.M. lot seems in some ways like a factory, full of people running about in all directions.

I drove back through to Beverly Hills, went into the flower shop and spent money extravagantly. I sent roses to Norma Shearer ; she asked me to dinner to-morrow night, but I wasn't able to accept. I sent another bunch up to Mary Pickford. Douglas has just returned by airplane from the coast to spend Christmas with her.

I sent some azaleas to Mrs. Cook, my landlady, and to Virginia, and I sent another pot of flowers to Mrs. Huston, and I bought a whacking lot of flowers for myself : wonderful lemon-coloured gladioli, bunches of cornflowers, and pretty little flowers the name of which I don't know, and a big blue flower rather like what isn't borage but what I think is. At any rate, we'll have some flowers

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in honour of you to-morrow. At this very moment I am dictating wearing a beautiful carnation.

Culver City, where the M.G.M. lot is, is right on the other side of Beverly Hills—not beyond the hills but down towards the coast.

It took us twenty minutes to get there, and I had a turkey lunch which was enough for six people. They gave me all the turkey except the bones. That's the trouble with these United States, they give you too much to eat.

Before I left for Culver City, R.K.O. sent up a photographer and the chief Press agent, whose name is Herb Moulton. They took a lot of pictures in the house, or rather in my sitting-room. They also took some pictures outside of the house—me, standing by the Christmas tree, and Bob and me, with Robert in the background, showing the house itself. I really had these taken in order to give you some idea what sort of place we are living in, though, of course, they will be used for publicity purposes.

It is all over the M.G.M. lot that I have been here three weeks and written three stories. In fact, my reputation for rapid work is being spread in all directions, and that is all to the good.

I think this is all the news that's fit to print,

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and there is no other kind. I am posting this on Christmas Eve ; it might catch you at Caux, but I'm sending it to London because I gather your stay at Caux will not be a very long one, especially if there is no snow.

I am booking a call for half-past three on New Year's Eve. That will get to you at half-past twelve, which means that you can leave the table and get to the phone in the hall.

Later.

You can have no idea how beautiful North Maple Drive, and, I suppose, every other drive, looks to-night. Every house that has an illuminated tree has put it on. We have gone absolutely mad on decoration, and in the big holly wreath that hangs on the door we have entwined coloured lights which are now illuminated. Over the big stone fireplace behind me a second wreath has been hung, one presumes by Robert—a much better idea than hanging it in the window.

Christmas Day.

I got up at six o'clock this morning, and it was pouring with rain, really pouring. It was so

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dismal that I switched on the lights of the Christmas tree outside and then turned on the holly wreath on the door, which is embellished with red and white lights and looks grand. It was so dismal that I didn't feel like working.

Merian Cooper called and we talked over the big animal play we are going to write, or, rather, I am writing and he is directing. He has just had an approval from New York, and I am going to turn him out a scenario. It will take six months to make. He's a terribly nice fellow and I get on well with him, as I do with David Selznik, who is a regular fellow.

I am going to Agua Caliente for New Year's Eve. There is a big party there, and I think it will be better than sitting at home. I shall spend the night there, see the racing on New Year's Day, and come back here on the Saturday; so that I shall be calling you in the afternoon of New Year's Eve.

I went round to Guy Bolton's for a cocktail. There were one or two people there, including the author of "The Cat and the Canary", Williard, a bluff, big chap, very nice, and his wife.

In the afternoon the weather cleared magically and by the evening we had a perfectly clear sky and the most gorgeous sunset. At the moment

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there is a high riding moon and no clouds. As I drove back from Guy Bolton's along Sunset Boulevard it was marvellous to look down upon the lights, and particularly to look down the drives and see all the Christmas trees blazing.

The dinner was a most excellent one : roast turkey, exquisitely cooked, with cranberry sauce, a nut salad, and sweet corn soup, coffee, and a Christmas pudding made by Terry's mother in Santa Barbara and sent up to me.

I had some champagne opened for the normal and the silent toasts, but as at the moment it is about five o'clock in the morning in Caux I don't imagine you felt any responsive thrill.

I have done practically no work to-day except sentimentalise "The Frightened Lady". To-morrow I am going down to Hollywood to show myself. I shall be glad when we have got into the New Year.

Saturday, 26th December, 1931.

This has been a thoroughly lazy day. I went down to the studio this morning and lunched with Cooper. I collected my telegrams.

To-day is Marie's day out ; she has one day a week ; so we dined at the Brown Derby. She's

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a terribly good sort, and if you come out here next year I want to engage her. I have told you practically all the news of to-day. There is an article in to-morrow's *Los Angeles Times*, which you can buy to-night, which describes me as stout and pleasantly bald. That will give you a merry ha-ha.

The weather has been grand to-day—blue skies and sunshine—but rain is predicted for to-morrow morning; there's another storm coming down from North California—"storm" means rain. It is very odd to read in the papers a pæan of welcome to these — rains. Apparently they only had one inch last year, and they've had five inches since I've been here, and all their dams are filled and it's grand for the farmers.

It was interesting at lunch in the restaurant at the studio, because they are shooting a Western film and all the cowboys and cowgirls with their make-up on were in to lunch, most of them attractive.

I expect we shall be getting very busy next week as soon as the New Year is over, and I really must have all my work finished. If I can get in a good day to-morrow, Sunday, I shall be O.K. If I could knock off twenty-one [dictaphone] cylinders in a day, which is an enormous lot, I'd

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have broken the back of the work. I am pretty certain to do eighteen. The scenario is rather difficult to write, because it is all action.

Sunday, 27th December, 1931.

To-day it has been raining like the devil. It started at 3 o'clock this morning and has continued. We knew it was coming, because the weather forecasts here are pretty accurate. There's been a big storm in Northern California, and this is the tail of it. At the moment of writing, 5.30 p.m., Monday, which is 2.30 a.m., Caux time, Tuesday, the rain has stopped.

By the way, do you realise that you and I are not awake together more than four or five hours a day at the same time? I usually go to bed at eleven, which is eight o'clock in Caux the next morning, and get up at seven, which is four o'clock in the afternoon at Caux, and three o'clock in England.

The story is going very well, but at the moment has come to what I call a lazy stop. That is to say, I knocked off in a bit that didn't terribly interest me, which is always a fatal thing to do.

I didn't tell you much about my Constance

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Bennett scenario. It has been read by one of the executives, who likes it tremendously, and is now being read by Selznik himself.

Merian Cooper, who is one of the executives, the man who produced "Chang" and "The Four Feathers", said that his secretary, who is the best judge of pictures he knows, marked it as a wonderful story. There is a tremendous lot I can do with it yet. I am most anxious that it should go through, because it will be the first non-crime play and the first sex play that I have ever done.

I am beginning to be sorry now that I didn't send you the script, as I originally intended; but the moment I get an O.K. on it—that is to say, on the idea—I'll send it along to you.

It is difficult to believe that I have only been here three weeks. I seem to have been here years, wasting most of them.

I would very much like to know what all the presents are that everybody has got. I presume, however, that the particulars of all these are in the letter which should be at the Beverly-Wilshire to-day, but isn't. By the way, there's no "t" in Wilshire, but as you won't have to be writing there again it doesn't matter.

I have practically decided to stay out for the full time—that is to say, until March. One of

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the objections I have—and it is a perfectly absurd one—is that I shall miss Good Friday and Easter Monday in England ! But I shall be back for my birthday. (Loud cheers.)

I haven't again broached to you the prospect of your coming out. I am wondering if the journey, supposing you could make it, would compensate for the worry you would have about leaving Penny behind. I don't know what you are doing about the play ["The Green Pack"] at Wyndham's, or when it is going to be produced, but obviously until that was well out of the way you couldn't possibly think of coming out.

If I knew that the Constance Bennett film was right, and that I was going to produce it, I should have Pat out here, I think, if you couldn't come. But here, again, I could not possibly make a decision until the 30th, when my contract is renewable after its first period. Anyway, I wouldn't have her out unless I knew a lot of people, and at present I don't. Before the end of January things will be marching.

MORE WORK—AND THE STUDIO



MORE WORK—AND THE STUDIO

Tuesday, 29th December, 1931.

TO-DAY I got up at half-past five and have practically been dictating without stopping all day. It is now something past ten.

I got a bit tired towards the evening, so I dressed and went down to the Brown Derby to dinner and met Fred Kerr and Mrs. Kerr. Though I know him, of course, as an actor, and a very good actor, I have never met him before, and we sat and talked after I had introduced myself.

After dinner, of course, there was not a ghost of a chance of doing much work, though I managed to dictate about 600 words, and I am leaving the rest for to-morrow.

I have written a little letter in verse to Penny.

I had a letter from you and also one from Pat and another from Miss Reissar. To-morrow I am going down to the studio to meet Cooper.

An announcement has been made in the local Press that I am doing a super-horror story with Cooper, but the truth is it is much more his story than mine. I am rather enthusiastic about it, but the story has got to be more or less written to

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provide certain spectacular effects. I shall get much more credit out of the picture than I deserve, if it is a success, but, as I shall be blamed by the public if it's a failure, that seems fair.

I am rather glad I'm going to Agua Caliente, because it will be a change, and in a sense a rest.

The "Leviathan" is not sailing; there were so few bookings that it wasn't worth the trip, and so the next boat is not till next Monday, when the "Majestic" will carry my loyal and affectionate greetings.

To-day has been a perfectly beautiful day, and to-night the sky is a mass of stars. Rain, however, is predicted to be on its way. The people of Los Angeles are rather jubilant about getting eight inches of rain, and there have not been such flood scenes for nineteen or twenty years. Even our lawn at the back got a little floody, and I had to call in two plumbers to find a place where the water would go. As the only place that water will go is down, they had some job, but eventually succeeded.

Wednesday, 30th December, 1931.

I had an appointment with Merian Cooper at 11 o'clock, and we saw a girl for our play. I don't



[General Photographic Agency

EDGAR WALLACE

AT HIS HOUSE AT BEVERLY HILLS; ONE OF THE LAST PICTURES
TAKEN OF HIM

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think she will quite do. She's got a contract with Paramount, so it doesn't matter. She was terribly pretty and had a lovely figure, but what we want is a very mobile kind of face that will express horror.

We had a long talk about the scenario, which is not yet written but only roughly sketched, and came to a decision as to the opening. We practically know how the story is going to run. There will be a tremendous lot of action in it, but there will also be a lot of dialogue.

I saw a length of the film which we might use. R.K.O. was going to produce a prehistoric animal picture and made one or two shots. They were not particularly good, though there was one excellent sequence where a man is chased by a dinosaur.

I went into the animation room and watched the preparation of the giant monkey which appears in this play. Its skeleton and framework are complete.

He is, of course, a figure, but a moving figure. You have no idea of the care that is taken in the preparation of these pictures. Cooper insists that every shot he takes shall first of all be drawn and appear before him as a picture. The most important scenes are really drawn and shaded, and they are most artistic.

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Talking of the care they take, I saw a wood-carver fashioning the skull on which the actual figure will be built. In another place was a great scale model of a gigantic gorilla, which had been made specially. One of the gorilla figures will be nearly thirty feet high. All round the walls are wooden models of prehistoric beasts. The animation room is a projection room which has been turned into a workshop. There are two miniature sets with real miniature trees, on which the prehistoric animals are made to gambol. Only fifty feet can be taken a day of the animating part. Every move of the animal has to be fixed by the artist, including the ripples of his muscles. Of course it is a most tedious job.

As I was going away I met an artist who was on the staff of *The Daily Mail* and who illustrated one of my stories. He is at work in the poster department. A little while later I met Richard Dix and Joel Macrae. Joel is one of the coming men, an awfully nice boy who came straight from college to the Hollywood lot. They are going to build him up into a star, and I should think he's certain to reach there.

I lunched with "Coop" but did not see David Selznik.

You will be interested to know that my favourite

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lunch is a beefsteak sandwich, which is a hot beefsteak between slices of new bread. Thus do I break it to you that I'm not dieting, though I've eaten more — lettuce since I've been in this country than in my short but useful life.

Coop's got a cold, and he's going into a hospital for 24 hours for a cure. Apparently he lives under a tent in a vapour of eucalyptus. It seems a lousy way of getting well.

The weather has become fine again, and it looks as if my trip to Agua Caliente will be made under ideal weather conditions. I saw Virginia Bedford and Guy Bolton before dinner and made arrangements for Terry, my chauffeur, to take Guy's car down to Agua Caliente with our baggage. Robert is going with Terry.

Apparently New Year's Eve at Caliente is a very hectic affair. Everybody in Hollywood has a room at the hotel. The gambling houses go all night and the racing track goes all day. I'm taking down \$500 and no cheque book.

Steve Donoghue is here. I haven't seen him; he's staying at the Biltmore. Where Michael Beary is, nobody knows. He hasn't wired his arrival from New York. He may have had a rough passage.

When Guy comes over to England we must

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give him a really good time. He is one of the nicest men imaginable, a grand soul.

I didn't much like going to Caliente, but now I am rather looking forward to it. I have had a terribly heavy week. In the three weeks I've been in Hollywood I have written three scenarios, two of them full out, and quite a number of articles. So you may say that I've been "chained to my desk". I am looking forward to to-morrow morning, when I shall be talking to you, please God and the telephone service. This is a luxury which is more or less a necessity.

I forgot to tell you that I sentimentalised "The Frightened Lady" for *Collier's Magazine*, among my other jobs.

As soon as I come back from Caliente I am going to get on to my synopsis for the *American Magazine* serial of 60,000 words, and I am also going to prepare rather a careful synopsis of a quick-action thriller and mystery story. It doesn't look as if I shall be able to direct Constance Bennett, because she's got a picture to do first that is already scheduled and in preparation. It is Ibanez's "Blood and Sand".

Guy and I will probably be coming home together, though he has his house till April 26 and may want to stay on till then. He has been

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working very hard and has got permission from Fox to take a nice holiday.

I am going to write the story of our beast play in collaboration with Merian Cooper. That is to say, I will give him a "bar line", a bar line being credit as collaborator, because he has really suggested the story, though I of course shall write it, and I am to be allowed to use the illustrations that we are having drawn. It ought to be the best boys' book of the year. He doesn't want to take a penny out of it as long as he has a credit line.

He's a terribly nice man, one of the best I have ever met. He was a great airman during the war, and was with the Polish armies, and he knows Africa down as far as Abyssinia, and Siam, where he did "Chang", and the Sudan, where he did "The Four Feathers".

Robert continues to be very satisfactory. He's all agog about going down through the desert to Agua Caliente. We go by train to Santiago (which they call Santiaygo) and by car across the frontier. Anyway, it's going to be interesting to go into Mexico and see the native town, Tehuna. I will add a line in the morning before I go and after I have spoken to you.

PLANS THAT MISCARRIED

PLANS THAT MISCARRIED

Thursday, 31st December, 1931.

YOUR voice came through clearly, so did Penny's, Michael's, and Pat's, and it was grand to hear you.

I am quite in agreement about putting the play on at once, and I want you to tell Miss Reissar to number every line of every page of the copy agreed upon, so that if I wire corrections you will be able to spot them at once. Also I can put in new stuff from here by night letter.

Didn't you think it was a marvellously clear reception this morning?

It is a little overcast, but Bob, who is the world's best weather prophet, or says he is, predicts a fine day.

I am leaving at two o'clock for Agua Caliente, and I'll be back on Saturday.

New Year's Day.

The trip to Agua Caliente was an amusing fiasco.

I think I told you that Guy Bolton is one of the nicest fellows in the world, a very gentle soul who thinks for everybody.

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We had arranged to go to Agua Caliente, and at 11.30, half an hour late, I sent off Terry, the chauffeur, and Robert in Guy Bolton's car, piled with baggage. We were following at two o'clock by train, and they were meeting us at San Diego (by the way, San Diego is what I called Santiago ; the mistake is pardonable). They were meeting us at San Diego, as I said before, and driving us over the frontier.

I went round at one o'clock to pick up Guy. Eventually we were all set and dressed, and then Guy remembered that he hadn't any money. I offered to lend him any money I had in my pocket, which was \$500, but no, he must get money from his bank, and he hadn't got a cheque-book. Anyway, we stopped at the bank, and then we stopped at a corner store where Guy bought me some English magazines, and then we made several short cuts, where all the lights were against us and the traffic was blocked to hell.

In addition to all these things—or, as they say in the United States, as a background to these dramatic happenings—it was raining like hell.

To cut a long and tedious story short, we arrived five minutes after the train drew out. To make matters infinitely more complicated, Guy had left his ticket behind at the house, and a young

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man who was lunching with us—rather a nice young man—had seized the ticket, dashed down to the station in a high-speed car, ran alongside the train, as he said, for a quarter of a mile, and handed it over to the conductor, saying he would find us on the train.

All our clothes had gone down to San Diego. There was not another train till half-past six, and the Mexican border line closes at six. We thought of flying. I confess I had visions of Terry and Robert plunging through the downpour on their five-hour journey, and felt a certain amount of sympathy with them. Should we go by the six o'clock train? The border was open every hour till twelve.

I suggested we should dine at the Brown Derby, so we agreed and at half-past seven I picked him up. Guy packed a couple of bottles of champagne in a manuscript case, and we had really a good dinner.

In the meantime Guy had telephoned to San Diego and paged Terry, who eventually rang me up. I told him to come back. It was very necessary that he should come back, for I had no slippers, shaving material, even a good change of clothing.

Guy came back to the house and stayed till

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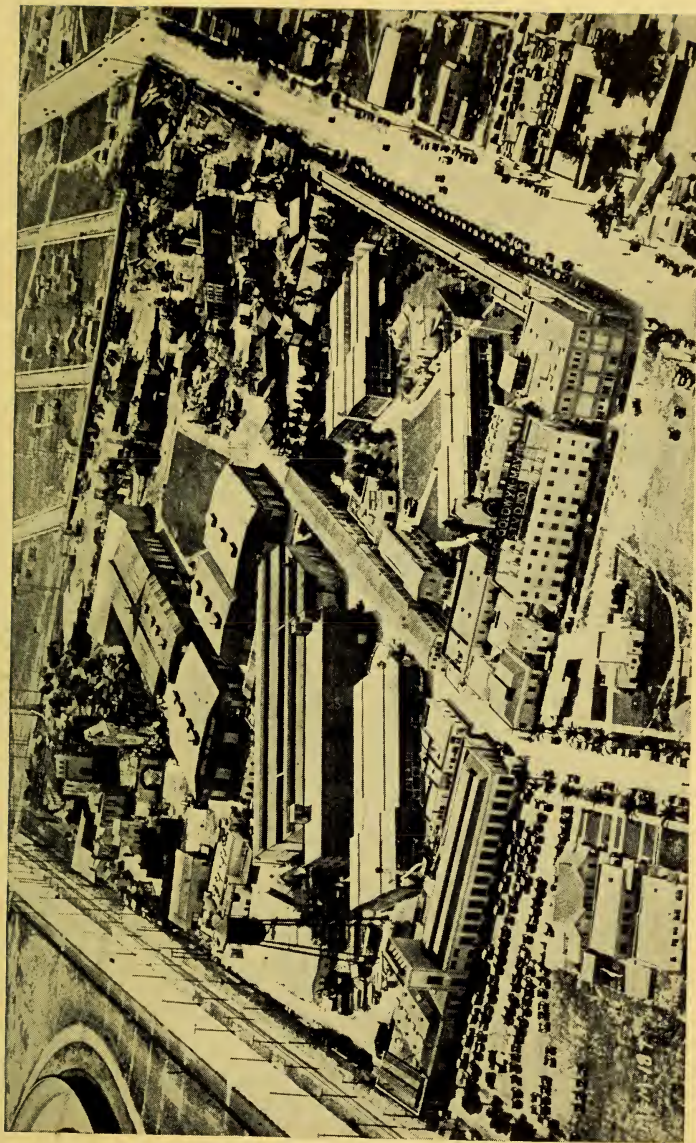
about ten. When he went, Bob and I settled down steadily just to wait, each suggesting the other should go to bed.

Guy said he'd be up till twelve, but when at 11.30 Terry arrived with a broad grin, having driven steadily for ten and a half hours, and I rang up Guy, he was dead to the world, and I got no answer, so I sent his car round and had it parked in his garage, and apparently all was well.

I had a thoroughly lazy morning, and in the afternoon settled down to the scenario of the beast play. I had hardly started when there was a ring on the telephone. It was Fabia Drake, who is playing with the Stratford Players. I asked her to come round to tea. She was staying with an English girl who had come out here. Her name is Joan Carr. I thought there was a possibility of placing her in my beast play, as we have not yet settled on the woman, so I asked her to come round. She was quite charming, quite pretty, and has the requisite figure.

After they had gone I went on working at the scenario and I have got 28 pages of it done, which is a good start. I can't do very much at a time because each sequence has to be approved by "Coop".

Apparently Fabia spent New Year's Eve with



[Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer]

THE METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER STUDIOS AT HOLLYWOOD



MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

"Larry" Olivier and his wife, who is Eva Moore's daughter. Eva, by the way, is out here.

To-day being New Year's Day is a public holiday. It has been rather a lovely day, though the promise in the morning was not too bright. My oranges are getting ripe, and I presented Fabia with a rose grown in my own garden. It was not my rose anyway.

I hope they will take Joan Carr. She is a nice kid.

I didn't tell you that Carl Brandt sent a long and expensive wire saying that he didn't like a short story called "The Death Watch" which I had sent him. He thought it wasn't up to my usual style, and begged me to make some alterations in it.

WORK AND PLAY

WORK AND PLAY

Saturday, 2nd January, 1932.

I HAVE just had your long letter starting on the 15th and going on to the 19th. It was grand to see you were sending it by air mail. It is that sort of thing that makes husbands faithful to wives.

I am just going down to the studio. By the way, I had a letter from Sam about "The Old Man". The notices were really wonderful, and he's booked a big circuit, which clears the cost of the picture, and shows a profit.

I followed your journey from Caux to London by the clock, and at the moment of writing you are dining with Gerald [Sir Gerald du Maurier]—8 o'clock in England. Last night Bob and I had a grand time planning out our time-table on our return journey, though it's a very long way off. Still, if I work hard the time will pass.

Sunday, 3rd January, 1932.

I dined with Fabia Drake and Joan Carr last night—or, rather, they dined with me—at the Brown Derby, and afterwards they came on to

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the house till about a quarter to eleven. While we were talking, Norma Shearer's chauffeur called with a note from her thanking me for some flowers I had sent for Christmas Day.

Walter Huston called up and asked me to lunch with him next week. He and his wife had been away, and he is at present engaged in doing some sort of picture.

Cooper was delighted with the first part of the scenario I showed him.

You might tell Penny that Norma Shearer writes the same "b's" as she does. In fact, I'll send the little note on with this.

There seems to have been some sort of trouble up on Sunset Boulevard last night. At twenty minutes to two I was awakened by a fusillade of shots. Either it was a succession of backfires which it didn't sound like, or else the police had come upon some hold-up man and expostulated with him.

The city of Beverly Hills is one of the best patrolled in the United States, and there is little or no crime here. As a rule the hoodlums give Beverly Hills a wide berth, but as there are filling stations to be robbed one supposes that the more hungry and the more desperate do come into this area.

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The killing of a robber is dismissed in two or three lines, unless he happens to be a bank robber. A week or so ago a man at the head of a booze syndicate who had been making himself objectionable was put on the spot at the back of what the newspapers called "his luxury home", but which was in fact a maisonnette. I haven't seen the police since I've been here. As soon as I get a little slack I am going to make a round of calls.

To-day is beautifully bright and sunny, with a rather high wind. The sky is perfectly blue, and if I took the trouble to walk outside my front door I should probably find Beverly Hills looking glorious ; but I've got a lot of work to do to-day, and I simply refuse to go out. One gets a grand exhilarated feeling in the early mornings. It's marvellous, the effect of sunlight on the human soul.

I had your wire this morning telling me that you had a long talk with Gerald and were going right ahead with the play. That's grand news.

One night this week I'm going to give a little dinner and ask Joel McCrae.

You'll be interested to know that I am doing no diet, and I am putting on weight. Bob, on the other hand, is doing exercises and diet, and is almost sylph-like.

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Monday, 4th January, 1932.

The principal thing that happened to-day was the arrival of Michael Beary with the same aplomb as though he were walking into Newmarket. He came in on "The Chief" to the minute and I brought him up to the house. I am keeping him at the Beverly-Wilshire, because I don't think he could be comfortable here, and I have no room for him, which seems the best reason of all.

Michael's full of beans, terribly enthusiastic, and the thing that impressed him most on the visit was the number of pigs he saw of various varieties in the prairie, and also the fact that he came up 164 miles by the side of the Hudson, which was frozen over.

Michael Beary was simply dazed with the wonder of California by the time I got him home. I brought him along Sunset Boulevard, and when you get to Beverly Hills you look down upon a wide, flat valley, entirely covered with lights as far as the eye can see.

"Like a field of yellow and red tulips," Michael described it. It was an amazing experience for him and he's gone home quite sleepy, to have the bath which is overdue. He had a grand time coming out, and, of course, made friends and

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introduced himself to a man and woman from Chicago.

We dined together and I kept him here till about nine. He insisted upon writing a letter to Penny which she won't be able to read, because I couldn't, and he thinks I'm looking wonderful.

By the way, I have sent you a set of photographs taken on Christmas Eve, probably the best I have had done. When you get them I don't know where Pat will be, but I'd like her to see them, and perhaps you would like to send them out to Caux, that they may know in what style I live in Beverly Hills, Calif.

I have nearly finished the beast scenario, and Cooper has the second part and is coming up to discuss one or two points which he thinks are important, but which are really unimportant since they can be altered terribly easily.

I don't know what to do about my cook—she is making the food too good. To-morrow I am going to start exercises, more or less. Bob has lost 19lb. since he has been out here, and what he can do I can do, by heaven!

I have taken a night man both as night watchman and to give me my tea if I wake up and to relieve Robert when he wants to go out. Robert has been terribly good, but he is looking a bit

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worn and I don't think he's having enough outings. In fact, as he doesn't go out at all, I am almost sure that I am right.

Tuesday, 5th January, 1932.

Cooper and O'Brien came and we went right through the script, except the very last two reels, which are not written. What promised to be a very tedious conference—it actually lasted from 9.30 to 1 o'clock—proved to be quite interesting and amusing, though we never got off the subject of the scenario and took it page by page. Cooper is very pleased, and to-day I am finishing the scenario and letting him have it.

Tuesday night.

I was on the phone to you this afternoon and they tell me I was speaking nine minutes. You get a rebate for nine minutes: it only counts as seven—\$98.

Among other of my minor tragedies of the past two days our drains have gone wrong. In fact, they are so bad that we sent for a plumber. The owner of the house insisted upon her plumber coming, and between the two we had no —

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plumber at all, but all the unpleasant things happening that happen when drains are stopped.

At last we got a plumber in, but I decided the best thing to do was to get out of the house with staff and go to the Beverly-Wilshire. I am writing this bit now from the Beverly, and I shall be back in my house to-morrow night, God willing and the plumber being efficient.

Michael went up to see John McCormack, who lives right on one of the canyons above Hollywood. He's a great friend of Michael's.

Michael, I might tell you, is in a state of dazed wonder. He is quite content with conditions as he finds them, quite content that I am terribly busy and he's got to look after himself. I put him in the Beverly-Wilshire, as I think I told you. He thinks Hollywood's marvellous, and he was terribly bucked to talk to you. In fact, he's going to have a few dollars' worth himself to John as soon as we get back to the house.

He is really and truly satisfied with his trip. To-night he's gone to see a fight organised for some charity. To-morrow I don't know what he's going to do, but he's quite content to roam about. I took him over to the Brown Derby for dinner.

I have finished the scenario of "Kong". That

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is the name. If I have told you this before, excuse me, miss.

Owing to insanitary drains Robert has a night out. It is funny being back in my old suite in the Wilshire and very noisy after the quietude of Beverly Hills.

I think you will like the pictures I have sent you. There is another one of Bob and me, but Bob has that. It's a better one of him than of me anyway.

My cook is terribly upset about my leaving the house to-night. She had a marvellous dinner of chicken and ice-cream. I am on a diet. That is the diet. Michael and I had chicken breast and spaghetti for dinner. That is the evening part of the diet. We are going to start taking exercises as soon as I get back to the house and the drains are put right. The drains have been responsible for everything.

There's a boat leaving that this can catch if I send it air mail, so I'm taking a chance and breaking off here.

Wednesday, 6th January, 1932.

I sat up till about one this morning writing to you and loafing. It was the first time since I've

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been in Beverly Hills I didn't wake except for one brief interval until nine o'clock, and in consequence, having had too much sleep, I feel a bit doped and I am sharpening up my wits on this diary.

Michael Beary has just phoned down—he's staying in the same hotel—to say that everything's grand. I asked him to come right away down, but he said the bed was too comfortable, so I presume he's not up. This is about ten o'clock.

It's a glorious morning, and the one great advantage of being down at this hotel is that one has a grand view of Beverly Hills. I have a man coming up from Kahns, the swagger flower shop, twice a week to fix the flowers in my house. They are terribly expensive but completely satisfying.

I am taking Michael down to the studio to-day. As a matter of fact he went yesterday with Terry to collect my letters.

The news this morning is that the drains are in working order and we return to our manorial hall to-day.

I forgot to tell you that last night at dinner Harold Lloyd was dining at the next table. He's supposed to be one of the richest men in Hollywood, but then, so many people are.

It's curious how one misses a house, and how

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very unsatisfying hotel life is. We shall all be glad to go back there to-day.

Robert had an evening off, as I told you, and looks quite respectable this morning.

Wednesday, 6th January, 1932.

I took Michael down to the studio. We lunched in the restaurant with Cooper, who was very charming to him, and afterwards Michael came to one of the projection rooms and saw a bit of a film called "The Lost Squadron", which I have to doctor. We also took him in the animating room and he saw animated figures being made. I think he thoroughly enjoyed it.

I went back to the house after my visit to the studio, where everything is grand, and it was nice to come home again. I also had the satisfaction of knowing that the beautiful flowers that Kahns are putting in, and which are probably hellishly expensive, are earning their keep.

Michael went out at four to call on Steve Donoghue and brought him back for a cocktail, and I asked Virginia Bedford and Guy Bolton over to dinner. When Steve came we persuaded him to stay on to dinner.



[Central News

EDGAR WALLACE AND HIS FAMILY

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It was a very amusing dinner party, with Steve and Michael chipping each other, and Guy Bolton, to whom all this was new, and Virginia, who was delighted with every word, completing, with Bob, a very pleasant sextette. Robert was a marvellous butler. They did not go till half-past ten, though Steve went immediately after dinner.

We have arranged to go down to Caliente on Saturday morning and I think it will be a pleasant week-end. I have been going at it very hard and I think the break will do me good.

I have got a little bit of a delicate job to put the first reel of "The Lost Squadron" right. It means they will have to shoot all over again, and therefore I've got to be very careful to restrict the sets. Thank heaven I am only responsible for the first reel, which is the only weakness in the story. Von Stroheim and Mary Astor are in it, and a girl called Dorothy Jordan, and Joel McCrae. I am very anxious that this should be a good job.

In the afternoon Gurney, who is a member of a big agency here, called and asked me if I would care for him to fix up a contract to carry me on from March to December, either with R.K.O. or with any other firm. He suggested M.G.M. I said no, I was going home.

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The next month or two are very important for me. If this big film gets over that Cooper is doing it's going to make a big difference to me, for although I am not responsible for the success of the picture, and really can't be, since the ideas were mainly Cooper's, I shall get all the credit for authorship and invention which rightly belongs to him.

Thursday, 7th January, 1932.

Michael put through a call to John [Beary] this morning, just for the novelty of it I suspect, and I had a talk with John. Immediately afterwards I got a phone from Central telling me that you were coming on the wire, which was a joyful surprise. It costs about £20 for nine minutes, and really it is worth the money. It keeps a marvellous material contact between us.

Michael went out with Steve Donoghue this morning, riding. They went over to some country club where there were supposed to be a lot of beautiful girls playing golf. He came back absolutely furious.

"Never let Mrs. Wallace take up golf," he said. "It makes women inhuman . . . great muscular shoulders . . ."

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He was absolutely livid about it. He said Steve enjoyed himself last night.

It's grand news that you are thinking about coming out, but I realise how impossible it may be.

I am going up to see John McCormack to-morrow after I've been to the studio, and I am going to Agua Caliente on Saturday till early Monday morning with Michael, possibly Virginia Bedford and Guy Bolton, and maybe Cooper and Joan Carr, if I can get them to come. Oh, and Robert ! The weather is glorious and warm, and the balsam logs smell grand.

I have finished the first reel which I had to alter of "The Lost Squadron", and this may be the first of my stuff to go into production. I am just changing the character of the girl in "Kong", my animal story. There is a fight between New York and Hollywood as to whether "Kong" shall be the title. Hollywood is enthusiastic, New York says "What does it mean?" which is rather true to type.

I am going to meet William Powell, Ann Harding, and Connie Bennett at lunch somewhere. I am trying to skip dinner parties, and have so far been successful.

Guy Bolton told Michael last night that I had

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ruined the writing industry in Hollywood, and that all the companies wanted writers to imitate me in the matter of speed. He also told Michael that I was the biggest success among the writers that had come out here. So you see what you've got !

I am going to change the last act of "The Green Pack", and I am also going to interpolate a scene on which the curtain can rise after the second act. I think it is necessary. I hope to send a copy of the telegram by this mail, and I am waiting now for the copy to come from Miss Reissar.

I am wiring to Gerald after I have finished this section of the diary.

I am sending you some air mail envelopes duly stamped. You will have to add the English stamps.

Friday, 8th January, 1932.

Michael was here till ten. We had a quiet dinner, and I shot him home at this hour.

This morning I went down to the studio and took Michael. Cooper likes him, and we have got a pass to go round all the stages. As I had arranged to go up with him to see John McCormack, I couldn't take him round the production stages.

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I will fix that, however, on Tuesday, and get somebody to look after him, possibly Perry Lieber, the very nice publicity man.

McCormack lives in a very nice house just behind the Chinese Theatre. It is an enormous place, and he owns the whole hill behind it. They were playing tennis when I arrived.

Mrs. or Countess McCormack is charming, and John is one of the grandest fellows you could possibly meet. You have got to meet him when he comes to town. He is really an arresting personality. I met his son who lives in London. McCormack says they are going home in April, and we shall see them in the summer. He's a grand tennis player.

Vines was there, the champion who will probably beat some of our best this year, also Morrie McLaughlan, ex-champion.

When I got home I found that I had ducked a view. I had promised to see a picture and hadn't. I thought it was about this that Cooper had been telephoning frantically, but it appears there were one or two slight alterations he wanted to make in the script of "Kong".

Anyway, I drove down and had a chat with him.

From Monday onward I am starting on the

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new mystery scenario, which I hope to sell to Selznik. When I say "sell" I don't mean get money for it, but get him to agree.

I received news of Karen's [Ostrer] baby arriving and called up Thalberg. Later Walter Huston, with whom I am lunching on Thursday, called me and was preparing to tell me the news when I pushed it on to him first.

By the way, when I got down to the studio this evening I found Joel McCrae, who, as I said before, is one of the coming stars.

I am arranging to meet Ann Harding next week, but I want to be very careful about making social engagements, because they interfere like hell with my work, and it is so easy to drift into a succession of dinners and lunches.

Saturday, 9th January, 1932.

I will be going off to Agua Caliente in about an hour, and there's nothing to report this morning. The play hasn't arrived, as I hoped it would, and I shall have to work on it on Monday.

RACING IN MEXICO

RACING IN MEXICO

Monday, 11th January, 1932.

THE drive to Agua Caliente was not as beautiful as I expected it to be. We drove through oil fields to a very dreary Pacific Ocean that was sending in clouds of sea fret. Later, when we left the sea a little and got a little way inland, the scenery was quite delightful. We stopped for lunch at San Clemente, which was bought by a millionaire and made into a community, the conditions of building being that every house must be in the Spanish style. It is as yet only a straggling place, but is quite beautiful.

By "we" I mean myself, Virginia Bedford, Joan Carr, Guy Bolton, and Robert. At the last minute Michael did a Beary on us and said he intended staying behind and seeing a polo match.

We got over the Mexican frontier about five in the afternoon, and as the Mexican authorities do not allow hired cars to cross the frontier, we had to engage a taxi and drove to the Agua Caliente Hotel. It is one of the most picturesque places I have ever seen, built entirely in the Spanish style with a great quadrangle enclosing an open-

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air bathing pool, and about sixty little bungalows each one more picturesque than the others.

It is one of those places where you dress for dinner. There is a beautiful dining-room in red lacquer, gorgeously ornamented, with a very fine orchestra, and, being Saturday, every table was filled.

Michael turned up just after we went into the gambling-room. There is a casino attached to this part of the building, where you can play roulette, a sort of game like *vingt et un*, and a game called birdcage. I managed to lose \$30 or \$40 before the night was through.

All the dignitaries of the Jockey Club called on me, and I learnt then for the first time that the second principal race of the day was called the Edgar Wallace Handicap, and that I have been appointed an extra steward.

Michael, of course, was his gallant self, took the women round, and bought two-dollar presents for them, and after lunch, served in a big open-air patio—the sun was so hot that we had to move from the centre to the side; in fact, the water bottle on the table was too hot to touch—we drove off in Guy Bolton's car, about six of us, to the course.

There were eight races, and I am enclosing

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some programmes. We had a box, and there were girls, wearing long white trousers with red stripes, scarlet jackets and round caps, who come and take your bets and make them and bring you back your money if you win.

I went up into the stewards' stand, and afterwards on to the judges' stand to judge my own race, and was introduced by microphone to the assembled horses.

Afterwards Steve Donoghue and Michael Beary were introduced. I backed five winners and won about £80.

It was rather ghastly getting up at half-past six and coming away in the morning, though the day was a perfectly beautiful one. In the meantime Bob telephoned through that you were coming on the wire, and I got the call postponed. It had to be postponed another half-hour, for I arrived nearer half-past two than two. The call was a very bad one; there was static between New York and England, and it was very difficult to hear you.

I have had a letter from Eva Moore, who is out here with her daughter, who is married to Laurence Olivier, asking me to go to dinner, but I can't. I can't even go to tea at the McCormacks.

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Although I was only away a little more than forty-eight hours it seems to have been a very long time, and in that time things have been standing still, which is not remarkable remembering that one of the days was Sunday and the other was Saturday.

FULL DAYS

FULL DAYS

Tuesday, 12th January, 1932.

LAST night I was working mentally, and this morning physically, on the play, and sent off the cable with the alterations. I don't know how many thousand words there are and how much it will cost, but I presume it will be pretty heavy. I think you will be able to understand it all right, because Bob, who doesn't know the play very closely, was able to retype the necessary pages from the telegraphed script. I am hoping to hear that you received and understood it. As I have sent it direct to you I haven't any doubt on the subject.

I went down to the studio this morning rather early to see Cooper. Apparently they are not going to accept "Kong" as a title : they think it has a Chinese sound and that it is too much like "Chang", and I can see their points of view.

I had to rewrite certain lines of "Kong", but, of course, this sort of thing will go on all the time ; one expects it. We are going into a huddle over it this week some time, and I hope that the executive are going to pass it quickly.

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I shall be working this week on a mystery story called "Eighty Minutes". My excursion to Caliente was a little upsetting so far as work was concerned, but I am very glad I took it. By the way, I am enclosing you some programmes to "show your friends".

Michael is going to give a party on Saturday at the Embassy, and I am joining him in it. Virginia Bedford is giving a party on Friday, and Walter Huston is giving a party on Thursday, to which I am bidden.

By the way, I forgot to tell you that Joan Carr is the girl who was staying with the Schiffs some three years ago at Caux. She had a motor accident and had her nose broken, but it is now all right. I am trying very hard to get her work at the R.K.O. Michael likes her and thinks she's a grand person.

Michael's activities took him to a McCormack concert at Pasadena last night, and they are taking him on some errand to-morrow. He is also going round the studio to-morrow morning under an able guide. He has thoroughly enjoyed himself—seen the polo, boxing, flown from Agua Caliente in the dark. He doesn't reach New York before the 20th; I have kidded him to stay over. He is amusing.



[Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

GRETA GARBO



[Radio Pictures

HELEN TWELVETREES
WHO STARRED IN "VENEER"

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I have written you a couple of private letters to-day. I find it very satisfying, when I am a bit worried as to how I shall start some big story to drop a note to you.

You will have learnt from my cable all about "The Crimson Circle", and probably I shall have a reply from you to-morrow. I am awfully obliged to you for all the trouble you have taken about this business, which, on the top of your theatrical activities, must have been rather a — nuisance.

I shall be very curious to know what you think about the play as I have revised it. It didn't take very long, but I don't think I scamped it. I wrote every line of the new stuff.

Michael is giving a dinner—did I tell you that?—and I am asking Evelyn Brent and her husband. She is one of the nicest people here by all accounts. I got in rather bad with Virginia because she had fixed a dinner for Thursday night, and I had accepted a luncheon engagement with Walter Huston. The luncheon engagement turned out to be a dinner engagement, so I found myself engaged two deep. They wanted me to meet a man named Walsh, and I am meeting him at luncheon at his house, which is amusing.

Michael's visit has turned out to be a great

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success from every point of view. He goes back a complete authority upon Hollywood, and very deeply impressed. He is going to New York for a day or two, then to Kentucky, and sails on the 29th. He hopes to be in time for the first night of "The Green Pack" ; I hope he won't, and that "The Green Pack" will be on and be a howling success before he reaches England.

By the way, on the first night you might arrange to put a phone call through to me to let me know how you fare. If you phone at twelve, I shall hear all about it at four in the afternoon. Personally, I rather like the changes I have made, and Harold Freedman, when he wired to me, was rather inclined to agree about the end.

I made an inquiry about the Connie Bennett film that I have written, but apparently it is still in the hands of readers.

Wednesday, 13th January, 1932.

The last two days have been rather unsettled, though we have had some glorious sunshine. Being unsettled in California means that there are a few clouds in the sky—as a matter of fact, it rained all night.

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I find it a little difficult to get a start on the new mystery story. I want to do it for a picture and also for the *American Magazine*, and I really want to get a crackerjack.

Michael has got a social call to make this morning, so I shan't see him. My room is full of flowers—gladioli, mimosa, and purple stocks. I expect to hear from you to-morrow about Michael's [his son] tonsil operation and an outline of the plans. I don't think I shall go to the studio to-day.

Thursday, 14th January, 1932.

Michael [Beary], who has some friends at Pasadena, brought back a big bunch of Californian heather. Last night he telephoned me that he was taking two girls to dinner at the Brown Derby. One of them was a film star, who has just come out. Bryan knows her—Sari Maritza. She is pretty, and under contract to Paramount. I went down to have coffee with them—I had already had my dinner. They all came back to the house afterwards, and Maritza, whose real name is Pat, had a horrible cold. I gave her a nasal douche and she stayed here till about eleven, when I shot them home. It was the usual sort of

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entertainment I gave them—trying their voices on the dictaphone, etc. She is a nice girl.

I am a little perturbed not to have received any acknowledgment of the script I telegraphed through to London, but I suppose that will come later. I intended putting in a little scene at the end of Act 2, and I will send it in case at the last moment Gerald [Sir Gerald du Maurier] thinks it will strengthen the play.

The boats from now on are few and far between until next week. Some weeks you get four or five sailings, and other weeks you only get one, and it's a bit of a nuisance.

There is nothing fresh to report from the studio. I find it a little difficult to get the story I want for my picture "Eighty Minutes". I think I told you about this before. I want the picture to run just as long as the story runs, that is to say, all the action takes place in eighty minutes, and you have no idea how difficult it is to compress a story without the bits that lead up.

I wanted to start right away with a murder and a chase, but if I do this I can't get the necessary introductions of character, and so I have got to start it from another angle and allow myself ten minutes to plant the characters before the real action begins.

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In a play like this one of the most difficult things is to give the occupation of the principal character, and that is really holding me up. I can make him a real estate agent or a banker, but if I make him a banker I've got to fit the action into banking hours, which means daylight, and as it is necessary to have a night sequence I am a little stuck, but I think I shall overcome that difficulty.

They are definitely not accepting "Kong" as a title, though Cooper still has hopes. If they don't take that I am going to suggest as a title "King Ape". Cooper is extremely pleased with the story and is going into conference one day this week.

Friday, 15th January, 1932.

Guy Bolton, Michael, and I lunched with Walsh, the man who produced "The Cock-Eyed World", "What Price Glory", and "Rain". He is tremendously interested in horses, and races at Agua Caliente.

While he was making "What Price Glory" he was driving home in the dark and going at a pretty good lick, when a rabbit jumped out, hit the wind-screen, and destroyed the sight of one eye.

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He has quite a beautiful house, but he is building a bigger one on the hill, and a ranch some way outside Los Angeles. It was a very interesting sort of meal. We talked horses all the time, and as poor Guy didn't know very much about race-horses, he should have been completely bored, but apparently it was interesting to him.

At night I went to dine with Walter Huston. There were six of us : Dr. Owen Jones and his wife, another doctor and Greta Nissen, a film star. I like Walter very much indeed, and Nan is a grand person. We talked about you and Pat most of the evening—that is to say, during that part of the evening when she and I were talking at all.

It was past midnight before I realised that dinner was over. It was a beautiful dinner, with Californian burgundy served, and it was really lovely wine. So often at American dinner parties the idea of entertainment is to serve you raw whisky, than which there is nothing more sickening.

I had a plentiful helping of very excellent brandy—in fact, I had more to drink than I have had for a very long time.

I got home about one, and woke this morning to an amazing phenomenon : the ground was covered with snow. I don't think they have seen

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snow in Hollywood or Beverly Hills for generations. It is quite thick—thick enough for some small children to be lugeing on the next lawn.

Apparently something went wrong in the night : all the lights went out at three and stayed out till about six. We have had about an hour of bright sunshine, but the clouds have come up again, and as I write there seems to be a possibility of more snow, which still lies quite thickly on the drive.

Walter Huston is a tremendously nice man, and, as I say, Nan is a darling. She was very tickled when I recited the native son verse, and told her that I'd got it from her by way of you.

By this time next week—to be exact, on Wednesday—I shall know whether R.K.O. are taking up my option for another period of eight weeks. Until I know this we can't make any plans about your coming out. I am writing you separately about that.

I like the place so much that in all probability I may come out earlier this year—that is, at the end of September instead of November. I have already been asked whether I would like to fill in the time between March and December, when my other contract starts—if they take up the option—with another contract for another film company.

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I don't think I should have any difficulty in fixing this, but I have told them that I am going home in any circumstances at the end of March.

To-night I have another dinner which Virginia is giving at her house in North Camden Drive, and to-morrow night is Michael's party. I have been trying to get Evelyn Brent, but I have not been able to get her when she's awake.

Cooper called me up last night and told me that everybody who had read "Kong" was enthusiastic. They say it is the best adventure story that has ever been written for the screen. It has yet to go past the executive, but I rather fancy there will be no kicks. We haven't yet got the girl. We've got to have a tiny for the part, but the tiny has got to act, and that, I think, is going to be the real difficulty more than the size.

Saturday, 16th January, 1932.

The dinner last night at Virginia's was amusing. There were four other people: the daughter of Mayer, of M.G.M., and her young husband, a man named Butler, who is a producer of some character, and his wife, who plays a good deal

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at the tables at Agua Caliente. They were going off last night.

There is a train that leaves Los Angeles at one in the morning and you can go to bed at eleven. You get to Agua Caliente about eight, so I presume it walks there.

Butler was amusing. He is a very good director, and one thing he told me was rather amusing. We were talking about how film companies change the titles of the books they buy, and he gave me an instance of a book that had been bought called "Pigs". When it was put over as a picture it was called "The Smile of a Cavalier", which I think is nearly one of the funniest.

Hollywood abounds in stories about Sam Goldwyn. One of the latest I heard was that he and his wife were lying on the beach and he was intently watching a bird that was wheeling overhead.

He said to his wife : "I like that pigeon."

She replied : "It's not a pigeon, it's a gull."

He said : "I don't care whether it's a gull or a boy, I like it."

He was out playing golf with Irving Thalberg and Louis Mayer. At the end of one hole he said : "Irving, you took six for that. Louis, you took

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eight." Then he turned to the caddie : "What did I take, caddie?"

An actor went in to settle a contract. He said : "I'm asking fifteen hundred a week."

"You're not asking fifteen hundred a week," said Goldwyn fiercely ; "you're asking twelve, and I'm giving you a thousand."

The other one, which I may have already told you, was that after a proposition had been put up to him, he brought his fist down on the table and said : "I'll give you my answer in two words—impossible !"

I was tired, though, and very glad to sneak home, as I had to be up early. I had had three hours' sleep in the afternoon, and was in bed by 12, and up again at six this morning.

Life runs very smoothly at the house, and my night man is a great success. He makes good tea and he relieves Robert in the evenings. Robert, by the way, is being entirely satisfactory, and when we come out next year I shall certainly bring him with me. If we get the family out I shall bring the big Rolls and possibly Feeney.

I am making another start at the story to-day. I am scared of rushing the introduction of it. I have got so much to get in that it is next to impos-

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sible to start the picture with a murder as I intended.

I had your cable this morning about the letters I sent from the Beverly-Wilshire.

Sunday, 17th January, 1932.

Michael threw a party last night—as a matter of fact, we threw it together. We had a dinner for twelve at the Embassy. Guy Bolton, Virginia Bedford, Joan Carr, Sari Maritza, Vivian Gaye, blonde secretary and manager, Rochelle Hudson, Captain Roark, the polo player, a friend of Michael's, Mrs. Roark, Merian Cooper, and Steve Donoghue were our guests.

The Embassy is very much like the Embassy in London except that it has a marvellous coloured band and is lit almost entirely by candles on the table.

We had a really wonderful dinner, and as the staff seemed to regard me as the host, and brought me all the dishes before they were served, it was my dinner more than Michael's.

I like Sari. Merian Cooper is, of course, a joy.

It was an off night, and the celebrities were not there, but next Saturday is a club night, and I am going to have Evelyn Brent and her husband,

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and Adrienne something, whose husband is Ruggles, the producer. (She was in "Are These Our Children?")

Next week I hope to finish my eighty minutes story, which I am afraid will have to be in another form. I can't compress the story for the sake of the stunt. After that Cooper has got another horror picture which he wants me to deal with. The eighty minutes story I now call "The Man Without a Face", and I am preparing it also for the *American Magazine*. I have then got to make a story out of "Kong", and there is a possibility of my directing "The Man Without a Face".

They have not yet made any decision about the Connie Bennett story, which is a very good one and will be turned into a tale as soon as I can find time. I have quite a lot of work to do, apparently, and since Michael's been here I have been rather loafing.

For my next Saturday's party I am also inviting Walter Huston and Nan.

It is remarkable what is the effect of the weather. During the dull days, when we had snow and rain (the snow has not been recorded in Los Angeles during the period that records have been kept, that is to say for 54 years), one was drowsy and always ready for bed in the afternoon or



[Topical Press Agency

MICHAEL BEARY

WHO ARRIVED AT HOLLYWOOD "WITH THE SAME APLOMB AS THOUGH
HE WERE WALKING INTO NEWMARKET"

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evening. But when the sun comes out and there's a little nip in the air, you can keep going all the time. For example, I got up at six o'clock yesterday morning and didn't go to bed until 2.30 the following morning.

You can get a party together very quickly, and you have most surprising results when you invite people. Michael was introduced to a very pretty girl, Rochelle Hudson, at the studio on Friday. On Saturday we telephoned to Perry Lieber, the publicity man, and asked him to get in touch with her, and ask if she would come to our party. She was there.

To-day being Sunday, the day of rest, I plan to do a bit of work. By Thursday I hope to have the Dictaphone going. They want me to go to Agua Caliente again.

Monday, 18th January, 1932.

Michael left last night. He was very sad and sent me a wire from the station. I did not go down to see him off. He has promised to go straight to you and tell you all about everything.

This morning I went down to the studio and met Lee Marcus, the New York head of R.K.O. He is a terribly nice man—I think I have said

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that before—and with him was Kathleen Brown, his secretary. They have both got a tremendous sense of humour. Lee's is almost whimsical. He was careful to explain to me that there was nothing patriotic about his name and that he was originally Leopold, but his mother insisted upon turning it into the more American form.

He is one of the big executives. There was a conference on "Kong" which, however, I couldn't attend. I met Cooper afterwards. He was as happy as a schoolboy. He had met the man who was his partner and who had acted as camera man in "Chang". He'd just returned from India, and "Coop" was overjoyed to meet him. It was a tremendous revelation of his genuineness. He said he had worked with him for seven years and never had a quarrel.

Lee Marcus wanted to see me because Basil Dean is opening his new studios at Ealing on February 15th. He suggested that we should get together all the R.K.O. players and make them say a little piece. It is rather amusing to do. Richard Dix, Connie Bennett, Ann Harding, Dolores del Rio, Helen Twelvetrees, and Laurence Olivier are amongst the twelve people who will welcome the new venture that evening.

I have had no mail from you this week, but I

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had a letter from Penny and a photograph of your fancy dresses. Pat looks quite odd but attractive.

I wrote to Nan Sunderland, Mrs. Huston, and apparently my letter arrived at a very psychological moment, because she called me up and begged me to come to dinner to-morrow night, when she would tell me just what my letter had done for her. You know what I am with the wimmin!

I am giving a dinner next Saturday at the Embassy to which I am inviting Laurence Olivier and his wife, Jill Esmond, Eva Moore, Walter Huston and Nan, and Evelyn Brent and her husband if they can come. I have an idea that they are giving a dinner at the same place. I shall have to pick up a few odd ones to make up the dozen, but it ought to be an amusing party.

I had a slight chest last night, but it has disappeared. To-day has been perfectly beautiful and quite hot, and a continuance of fine, warm weather is predicted. I might say that the weather prophecies in this part of the world are usually pretty slick.

Bay Veiller has just rung me up and asked me to dine and go on to see William Gillette in "Sherlock Holmes".

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Tuesday, 19th January, 1932.

We scratched out quite a bit of the mystery film last night, and I'll be able to send a synopsis to Carl this week. I have got an enormous amount of work to do, but once I get into it it will be thrown off quickly enough. In fact, it has just occurred to me that it would be a good idea if this afternoon I did the synopsis for the *American Magazine*, and mailed it to Carl. It will have the effect of getting it off my mind.

This morning I had a visit from Brown, the director who is making the reel which is to be shown at Ealing. I had the script ready for him and he took it away with him. After he had gone I had a visit from the Los Angeles correspondent of the *New York Times*, who has been ordered to wire a thousand-word interview with me on what I think of Hollywood now that I have settled down here. Before he arrived I dictated the thousand words to Bob, and it was exactly all he wanted.

I had a very good night's sleep and was down at seven. To-day is overcast but warm. It is, I think, clearing up, because the weather prophets say so. I am holding fast to my faith in these — weather prophets, but it's just a little bit difficult.

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One of the papers telephoned to ask me who were the guests at my dinner last Saturday night. I told them, and included Michael Beary as one of them, though it was his dinner. Still, he's not here, and I made all the arrangements, and it was all very amusing in consequence.

I had your cable and realised I hadn't cabled you for three days.

To-morrow R.K.O. have got to take my first option. I haven't heard from them yet, but I have no doubt that it will come through. Did I tell you I had got on to Evelyn Brent and asked her to dinner? She's having a party at the same place, so I shall see her and it will cost me nothing! That's the kind of economist I am!

I expect you're having a pretty anxious time about the play ["The Green Pack"] and it will be rotten for you on the first night, being deprived of my encouraging presence!

There have been some extraordinary changes in all the studios here. Willie Sheehan has left and they are putting in a new staff. R.K.O. has got plenty of money, and, with the new direction, will, I think, make good; and M.G.M. is, of course, sitting on top of the world. Their pictures are doing enormous business. The pictures which

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are going best are the horror pictures. "Frankenstein", "Dracula", and "Jekyll and Hyde" are the three money-makers—"Frankenstein" the biggest of all.

I am hoping still to get a good horror picture without corpses, and I am certain that "Kong" is going to be a wow.

Wednesday, 20th January, 1932.

There was another party at Walter Huston's last night. By the way, these are the only dinner parties I have been to yet where everybody dresses. Walter Huston's sister was there, Mrs. Carrington, a very remarkable woman. She has a house in Santa Barbara, but she lives in the east. Between her and Walter is a very sincere affection, but he is a man whom everybody is terribly fond of. Bobbie Jones was present—not the golfer, but the man who designed the scenery and directed so many of Eugene O'Neill's plays, a very amusing fellow. He did "Desire Under the Elms", in which Walter Huston played. There was an actor called Young, a very well-known man, and his wife, and Dr. Ellis Owen Jones, who is one of the big bone specialists in America. He expected to

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be called by phone and didn't even take a cocktail.

We talked about ghosts through the meal, and premonitions. It was a very interesting evening.

In the course of the evening Walter called up Clark Gable, who lives in the same building, with the idea of getting him down to their flat, but he was out. They say he's a terribly nice fellow and that success hasn't spoiled him. In one year he has become the biggest of all the screen attractions, and probably draws more money into the box office than Greta Garbo. Nan said that beyond being a little dazed by his success he is unchanged. He has recently married again. I shall probably meet him in the course of the next week or so.

I have got a programme sketched out. In addition to the mystery story, Cooper wants me to dramatise a short story they have bought or are buying, called "The Most Dangerous Game". There is quite a good idea behind it, but it will want a tremendous lot of working up. Bobbie Jones is going down to the studio to-day to see Cooper, whom he knows, and Walter is coming with him. We shall probably have luncheon on the lot.

Until the question of the option is settled, I

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don't propose to throw myself with any energy into new work.

Next Tuesday I am addressing the Advertising Club of Los Angeles, and I have been asked on my return to the east to break my journey at Toronto and speak to the Empire Club. If you are here I may do this, going on to Toronto from Chicago and then catching the night train down to New York.

Between now and the middle of February I hope to turn "Kong" into a story and produce a story for the *American Magazine*, in addition to which I have four short stories to write which are practically commissioned.

What I have got to be very careful about is to avoid luncheon engagements. I have got two dinner engagements, one on Wednesday next with Bay Veiller, and one on Friday with Dr. Owen Jones. I am keeping an engagement tablet clear after that as far as it is possible.

I am closing up the diary now so that we can catch the mail. If you allow two days for the air mail to get to New York you are cutting it fine. The mail leaves in the evening and should get to New York to-morrow night, or at the latest Friday morning, which leaves ample time to catch the midnight boat, this week, the "Europa".

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It wouldn't be a bad idea for you to get a list of the sailings, and where the "Europa" and "Bremen" are concerned—they are five-day boats—mark your letters "per S.S. 'Bremen' " or whatever the boat is. Sometimes you can catch a fast one like the "Ile de France".

HOME—OR RE-ENGAGEMENT?

HOME—OR RE-ENGAGEMENT ?

Thursday, 21st January, 1932.

I HAD the shock of my life last night. Joan Carr called me up and asked me if I'd like to dine with young Jesse Lasky and a woman whose name I forget, and I suggested the Brown Derby. Jesse Lasky turned out to be an awfully nice boy, terribly thoughtful and intelligent. I think I told you that his father, the Famous Players-Lasky, lost heavily in the big slump, and from enormous riches they have gone almost to comparative poverty. The boy is working at the Paramount.

We got to a table and didn't like it, so we settled down at another. As we were talking I heard my name called, and, looking round, whom should I see but Heather Thatcher, screaming with laughter at my surprise. She was looking wonderful and was dressed for some show. She was in New York just on the point of leaving for home when M.G.M. wired her telling her to come back and make a picture with Bob Montgomery. Naturally she is very elated.

She was a little reproachful as to why I hadn't written to her, but as she hadn't given me her

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address or her telephone number, except the number I got when I was in New York, which I forgot, I hadn't even been able to send her a Christmas greeting.

She said in a loud voice across the crowded room that she was going to tell my wife I was out with another woman, and was her own old self. I gave her my address and she is coming up to dinner or tea or something. It was grand to see her. She kissed me affectionately before the crowded restaurant and departed in a whirl, leaving behind her bag and her spectacle case, and returning in an even greater whirl to retrieve them.

I think I told you Lee Marcus is here. He is the head of the R.K.O. in New York and a hell of a nice fellow. With him is Kathleen Brown, his secretary, who has brought her husband with her.

Kathleen is just the brightest executive secretary you could possibly meet, with a tremendous sense of humour, a tremendous contempt for the old regime, and with big business at her finger tips. I had only seen her for half an hour in New York, but such are my magnetic qualities that we met affectionately. She is coming to dinner on Saturday night, always providing that I can



[Exclusive News Agency

EDGAR WALLACE AT AGUA CALIENTE

WHERE THE "EDGAR WALLACE HANDICAP" WAS HELD IN HONOUR OF
HIS VISIT



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"make it", because I have invited about ten people to dinner at a club of which I am not a member.

They want me to appear in the little film which is going to be shown at the opening of the R.K.O. studios at Ealing ; in fact, they want me to introduce the first of the characters. It will be rather fun, because I shall have to make up, and you will see me on the screen as I really am !

The "lot" is full of New York executives and directors of banks and financial advisers. They drive slowly round the stages, or, as you would call them, studios, in large limousines. I haven't met any of them and it is unlikely that I shall. They will all be skipping back east next Monday, and we shall probably settle down to do a bit of work.

I sent Nan some flowers yesterday, and we are all meeting at her flat on Saturday night before the party to have a cocktail.

I have put on about five pounds since I have been here, from which you will gather I am not dieting really strictly, but I really am "going to"—one of these days.

The trees in my garden are coming into flower. There is one tree with large masses of yellow blossom, at a distance rather like laburnum. As a matter of fact, something between laburnum

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and acacia. The spring flowers have not yet got going. There is plenty of pussy willow and the arum lilies are up at the studio, but not in the garden. I notice in other gardens, or rather on the lawns before the houses, shrubs are flowering in all varieties.

It is a perfect day and the nights are simply wonderful. The stars almost touch the ground, and on the distant hill crest you can see a star right on the line as though it is a big light. At night the sky is a deep blue.

Bob and Steve Donoghue went out last night to the first night of a film, and Bob found it very interesting. I have not yet made my appearance at a grand opening. This was at Warner Bros., Hollywood Theatre.

Most of to-day has been taken up by chasing round to discover whether they are going to renew my contract. As you know, it is for eight weeks with an option for a further eight weeks at a higher rate. The trouble is, apparently, that they are having wild fits of economy, and there is just a possibility that they may not on that account take up the option. In this case I should come home in the last week of February or the beginning of March, either in the "Europa" on February 27 or the "Berengaria" on March 4.

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I sincerely hope I don't have to come, but I shall have wired you long before you receive this, telling you what are my plans.

The trouble is that with all the New York executives, with the financiers and bankers who have put up the new money, being at Hollywood, and with conferences day and night on staffs and reconstruction, it is impossible to get anything coherent out of these people. It makes things rather unsettling.

At the back of my mind I am pretty sure they will take up the option, because I think that if economy was their trouble they would have approached me and asked me to go on at the old rate or even at a smaller rate ; and as most of the executives here are my personal friends I am sure this would have been done.

Cooper, who is on the "general staff", told me that the matter had never been discussed, and, in his opinion, they have not the slightest idea that my option is due. My first period of eight weeks terminates to-morrow week. They have the right to keep me on for another two weeks to clear up anything I am doing or which is unfinished. There will be so many unfinished things by then that I am pretty certain to go the extra two weeks.

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I lunched with Lee Marcus, the head of the New York organisation, and Kathleen Brown, his secretary, and Kenneth MacGowan was a fourth. He has come out to be story editor. He is a friend of Nigel's, and was the man behind "Lean Harvest". His duties are rather nebulous at the moment. I expect to hear something to-morrow about myself.

Saturday, 23rd January, 1932.

I still have no satisfaction about the renewal of my contract.

They have had four stories : one of them quite good, two of them very good, but there is no department which receives stories or reports on them or lets me know what is happening.

With the exception of "Kong" I have no information whatever as to the reactions of the people who have read them. "Kong" itself, although it has been written over a fortnight, has not been read by the chief executive ! In some ways it is rather like living in a madhouse. Now they want me to write a mystery story and turn it in by next week, and on that story they will decide whether they will continue my contract, which means that if it's a very good story they can say : "No, we won't

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give you a contract, but we'll take the story because it has been written in our time."

So I received your cable saying you had booked a provisional passage on the 24th with mixed feelings. I should hate to wire you not to come. I will tell you what happens after I have seen Cooper. I could, of course, stay on till you came out and stay on till the end of March, and I may elect to do this, especially if the play is a success.

As I write I have just received the Marcus Adams photographs. They were sent parcels post. I think they are marvellous of Penny, and one of them is very good of you. I am awfully pleased to have them, and if I stay on some of them go into frames.

Saturday, Later.

I went down and had a talk with Selznik. I am very anxious to produce a picture, and he promised me I should. It will be called "The Man Without a Face".

He was very tired ; he says he has had seven weeks of hell in this reconstruction period, and he apologised for not having given me more time. Altogether it was a very satisfactory talk, for it was rather disturbing not to know what

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one was doing and to have all one's plans upset.

The truth is that in this seven weeks I have not had a chance of proving myself, and that is what I was most anxious to have.

I met Richard Dix on the lot and we had a long talk about directors.

Cooper is enthusiastic about my directing a picture, and he's got a great scheme, which he uses, of having every key shot drawn by an artist.

I shall try to work some horror into this play which is not there now. In fact, the little bit I have done will have to be completely rewritten.

I also met Joel MacCrae and lunched with a big naval aeroplane designer, a friend of Cooper's, and his very charming young wife. They were going off to Honolulu, which is four days' steaming from here. They came over by air yesterday and had a wonderful run, though he said, very calmly, that it was very dangerous, because for hundreds of miles the ground was covered with snow and there was no possible chance of making a landing.

Sunday, 24th January, 1932.

I gave a dinner last night at the Embassy to Walter Huston and Nan. Lee Marcus and his

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wife came along, and Cooper looked in later I was very tired, but it was quite successful. Theda Bara and Fatty Arbuckle were there, and I met Evelyn Brent. She is very charming.

Your pictures have created quite a sensation with my domestic staff. Marie, the cook, ventured the opinion that I should never find anything in Hollywood as good-looking as you. I thought that would go well with you. And, of course, they are in ecstasies about Penny. I took them down to Walter Huston's last night and showed them round, and they were generally admired. Even my barber, who came up to cut my hair, expressed the view that you were fine and dandy, so you've passed.

To-day is simply glorious, and here am I working, though I don't exactly know what I should be doing if I weren't working. Sleeping, perhaps.

I have just called up Evelyn Brent on the phone and at two o'clock in the afternoon she certainly is sleeping. I am dining with her on Tuesday night, and I am dining with Walter Huston to-morrow night, just a private little dinner to talk over business possibilities, and I am dining with Bayard Veiller on Wednesday night, and dining with Guy and going to the première of Greta Garbo's new play on Thursday, and dining

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with Dr. Ellis Jones on Friday. On Saturday night I shall probably be dining out.

Curiously enough, it is a week in which I had planned to do a lot of work. If I can get the work done in the day it won't matter, but on Tuesday I've got a lecture and lunch with the Advertising Club of Los Angeles.

None of the Hollywood stars or even the feature players have their names in the telephone book. I suppose they get called up by their fans, and one has to go to all sorts of trouble to find out their addresses, because the telephone people will not tell you.

The telephone system here is perfect. It is worked by the dial method, and you very rarely get a wrong number. If you want to call New York, three thousand miles away, you don't even have to hang up. This is rather amazing. On ordinary days you can get through to England in about half an hour.

It is rather a nuisance not having had letters from you for so long, because I don't know what you are doing on Sundays, for example. I am wondering if you are going over to Switzerland for the week-end, where Michael is, and when he is going to have his tonsils out. I presume you are bringing him on the 24th.

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Everybody's delighted to hear you are coming, and there have even been paragraphs in the newspaper about it ! Where the information came from I am at a loss to know, but apparently they knew as soon as I did, even though they had the date wrong and fixed the 15th.

Joel MacCrae, a boy I have taken quite a liking to, is going off to Honolulu on Monday or Tuesday to film "Bird of Paradise". Quite a big company is going over, in spite of the fact that apparently just now in Honolulu white women walk in danger.

It is four days away by steamer, and must be quite a delightful place to spend a winter.

Monday, 25th January, 1932.

Yesterday I wrote four articles and a part of the new scenario. I had a long sleep in the afternoon, and late at night wrote you some letters. This morning I sent you a wire suggesting you should bring Penny. I don't know how the idea of Pat coming out for a month will appear to you, but it's not a bad idea in case I don't come back at the end of this year.

I shall do my best to get another contract, and that is why I am being so very careful about

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the present picture I am writing and directing, because I want to have two ends to my contract.

It is another beautiful day, and what looks to be like a smoky cloud low down on all the horizons. This is caused by the burning of hundreds of thousands of smudge pots ; when there is a frost threatened the citrus growers—oranges, lemons, grapefruit, etc.—light up these smudge pots under all the trees to prevent the frost killing the fruit, and the consequence is the appearance of a cloudy day not overhead but all round.

There is nothing new to report ; I am going to the studio to-day to see a picture and do a little talk with Richard Dix. I have decided not to go into the picture itself.

Tuesday, 26th January, 1932.

I dined with Walter Huston and Nan last night. There were just us three. We talked about various things, and had a little business talk about a radio engagement he has been offered. It was very pleasant, and I left about a quarter past eleven. Walter improves every time you meet him, and Nan is very sweet. Walter is very gentle, and so is Nan, for the matter of that,

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but she's got a shrewder conception of actualities.

When I went down to the studio yesterday and told Cooper I was getting on with my crime story, I incidentally mentioned another story I had in my mind. I think I told you about this yesterday ; if I did, Bob will cut it out. He went up to the ceiling at the idea, said it was the swellest opening for a picture he'd ever heard, and I am working on it now. I will send you the complete scenario when I am through.

My Constance Bennett scenario wasn't passed by the Constance Bennett section of R.K.O. They had about twenty stories to choose from and they chose another. As a matter of fact, I am learning a tremendous lot of what is required in motion pictures, not only the angles but the interests that the public want, and when I get back I'll be able to give British Lion a real rip-snorter. Tell Sam that if you meet him.

At twelve o'clock to-day I presented myself at the Biltmore Hotel to address the Los Angeles Advertising Club. There were about two hundred people present—one of the biggest gatherings they have had since Will Rogers addressed them, and Will is a star turn.

I talked upon "Crime and the Law", and my speech was broadcast. I discovered this after I

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had got down there, and it was a little disconcerting. However, I seem to have pleased them very much. I spoke for half an hour and got quite a reception at the end. I enclose their little publication, and if I get any cuttings I will send them to you. The lunch was sponsored by the Gas Company! Whether they paid for the food, or just arranged the radio, I don't know.

Wednesday, 27th January, 1932.

I had a sleep in the late afternoon, and at half-past seven went up to Evelyn Brent's. Joan, who is a very close friend of Evelyn's, was there, and Lowell Sherman came in. I like Evelyn Brent tremendously. She thinks Chalklands one of the loveliest houses that she's ever been in. She is a very real person, terribly sane, and without any hokum at all.

We talked about various people in the film business. She was very anxious that if I directed a film I should give a chance to a girl who is under contract to M.G.M., who, she thinks, is a grand actress. Lowell Sherman agreed. He has played with her. Her name is Karen Morley. She's got a small part in "Mata Hari", if you see it.

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By the way, all Hollywood is agog as to whether Greta Garbo will turn up at her première. Most people think she won't.

Sherman was very interesting about old-time actors. He knows London very well. We had quite a long talk about Ethel Levey and Georgette. They bought Pauline Frederick's house up on Sunset, tore down the old rose bowers, built a tiled swimming pool, refitted the house with trick bathrooms, and now they want to sell it or let it. They want \$2,000 a month for it.

Evelyn, as I say, looks as lovely as ever. Her nickname, by the way, is Betty, and her husband calls her Brent. That is one of the curious things about Hollywood, that people are referred to by their surnames. You never speak of Greta Garbo except as Garbo, or Norma Shearer except as Shearer.

We started dinner at half-past seven, and when I looked at my watch, still sitting round the table, it was half-past one, during which time I had drunk innumerable cups of coffee and littered the tablecloth with cigarette ash. Evelyn's coming to Europe this year. She loves London.

This morning Dr. Ellis Jones's secretary called me up and asked me if I'd like to go down and see an operation. As I didn't get to bed till nearly

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three and got up at eight, it is the last thing in the world I want to see.

The day is overcast. Last night it rained, but it was milder.

Thursday, 28th January, 1932.

The dinner last night at Bayard Veiller's was quite an experience, though I didn't get the names of three or four people who were there. Bay Veiller's wife is very charming. She says she has met you. Norma Shearer was there and Irving Thalberg; and do you remember Billie Burke? She is just as lovely as ever, though she has a grown-up daughter.

When I was introduced, she said: "I don't believe it!" She said she had heard so much about me, but never dreamt we should meet. I used to think what a swell actress she was in the old days, when one went to little cinemas in Oxford Street. She was very delightful to meet, and I shall, I hope, go to see her again. Her husband is Flo Ziegfeld, of Ziegfeld's Follies fame.

Norma was terribly nice, and we spoke about Pat Hastings. By the way, I wrote to him last night. I like Thalberg. He is extraordinarily



[Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer]

NORMA SHEARER

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young, but one of the most competent men here. I am going to do an article about him.

After dinner the party went on to the theatre, but I went home. I was feeling rather tired and went to bed at ten. There was a high wind, and there is still some sort of a wind blowing, though the day is cloudless and sunny.

My scenario is proceeding slowly but surely; it is the best I have done so far.

Friday, 29th January, 1932.

I went down to the studio, and at lunch met some high hats. It was funny to see bankers and people taking a 50-cent lunch. Actually I lunched with Cooper, but afterwards Lehman, the big New York banker, joined us, and then David Selznik came in.

In the evening I dined with Guy and had three large lamb chops, this being my fifth lamb chop in a day. I have got quite a passion for lamb just now. Afterwards we drove to the opening of "Mata Hari".

It is an amazing show. Outside the streets are crowded, and about two hundred policemen are on duty controlling traffic and the people, who

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were lined six-deep along the sidewalk for quite a long way to see the platinum pass.

If you are a celebrity you pause and make a little speech into the microphone, which is broadcast to the crowd. But, carefully hiding away my cigarette holder, I dodged through and avoided this experience. The only person who got a hand from the audience was Mary Pickford. Douglas Fairbanks was with her.

The place was packed with film celebrities, but I seemed to be reading the programme when most of them arrived and missed them. There was an entertainment, which was supposed to begin at half-past eight and actually began at a quarter-past nine. It lasted till half-past eleven, and at a quarter to twelve the picture began.

It was an experience, but I am not passionately keen on repeating it.

I had a wire from Billie Burke this morning: "Your lovely flowers made me realise I had really met you last night. It was as delightful as opening the flowers this morning." She was very gracious. It was two o'clock before I got home last night, and I slept till nine. I don't remember getting up at nine for a very long time.

This is the last day of my old contract, and the new one begins to-morrow. It doesn't seem

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eight weeks since I've been here, and ten weeks since I left England. Life is so settled here that it is almost difficult to believe that I can have any other existence outside of 716, North Maple Drive. I have most carefully avoided engagements next week, but I have a feeling that one or two may come along. Norma Shearer threatened to ask me to dinner, and somebody else.

I learnt a lot from this new picture about photography. The way they cut from close-ups to medium closes is amazing.

Saturday, 30th January, 1932.

Last night I dined with Dr. Ellis Jones. He and his wife are great fans of mine, and they are close friends of Walter Huston. Cecil de Mille was there and his wife, and a lawyer whose name I forget. It was quite a sort of family dinner, a sit-down-and-talk-after affair, but it was half-past twelve before one knew what the time was.

According to the lawyer, there is a tremendous lot of crime in Los Angeles that doesn't get into the paper. He told me an attempt had been made to murder the district attorney by a big vice merchant. The attorney escaped, but his guard

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was killed. This, of course, is in Los Angeles ; in Beverly Hills there is very little crime ; as I have said before, it is one of the best-policed cities in America, although you never see a policeman. A car patrols past your house every quarter of an hour day and night. You would never realise it was a police car.

He told me that a girl was driving a car two days ago in one of the busiest parts of the town at three in the afternoon, and at the corner of Western Avenue and Wilshire Boulevard a man got into the car with a gun in his hand, made her drive outside the city, assaulted her, and stole her car. The case did not get into the papers.

With such chit-chat did we pass the evening. To-night Merian Cooper is giving a dinner to the high hats and executives, to which I am bidden.

You will remember that Cecil de Mille was staying with Bunny Bannerman. He has a ranch an hour outside of Hollywood, a perfectly wild place. He says not a night passes but a mountain lion comes down and sniffs around. He asked me if I'd like to come and stay with him, and I said no, although if there was anything in the mountain lion story I'd get me a rifle and go out. I have never shot mountain lion, who is probably not as formidable as he sounds.

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De Mille is doing some big picture.

To-day I am going to do a bit of work and see how far I can get with my scenario.

Sunday, 31st January, 1932.

Cooper telephoned yesterday morning or rather his secretary did, to say that we were to meet at his place at 8.30 and the dinner would be round about nine.

I collected Sari Maritza, and when we got to the Château Elysée I discovered that the meeting time was 9.30. In other words, I was nearly an hour before everybody. About ten they began to trickle in. Fay Kay, or Kay Fay, a lovely girl, the wife of a Rhodes scholar, the man who wrote "Wings" and "Dawn Patrol", and himself a very charming man, was there, and Sylvia Sidney, another perfectly lovely creature, a little bit bigger than Penny.

One or two other celebrities whose names I didn't catch first, and then the R.K.O. party, with David Selznik and Mrs. Selznik, Lehman the banker, and an eminent banker whose name I don't know and his wife turned up round about eleven. It was half-past eleven when we sat down to the dinner at the Mayfair.

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Evelyn Brent had brought a party, or rather, Joicey, the agent, had, and when they were dancing I stepped over and joined them.

One of the party was to have been Gwilli Andree, but she sort of missed and they had to go and fetch her. She is supposed to be a ravishing beauty out of New York. She is R.K.O.'s new find.

The best fun was sitting at the table when everybody was dancing, watching the dancers come round.

Jamieson Thomas was at Cooper's party. He used to be at Elstree. Lowell Sherman brought Ethelind Terry, and I met her. Ricardo Cortez stopped in his dance for a little cross-talk and introduced me to his partner, Genevieve Tobin, who is very anxious to come to London to do a play. She is a charming girl.

I met Jeannette Macdonald, who was dancing round. She is a very attractive girl. It was a very quiet party, and we left at four in the morning.

I took Sari Maritza, whose name is Pat, back to her artistic apartment, and arrived home about twenty past four and went to bed at five.

Robert was on deck, looking a bit pop-eyed. He is terribly willing and treats such hours as an

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adventure, though he had to be up at ten at the latest.

The weather has broken. We have had one overcast day, and last night it rained like hell. To-day it is still raining and very dull. Weather like this is cataclysmic to the people of Los Angeles. Terry confided to me on the way home that a terrific climate change is taking place. I haven't seen the weather forecast, but I presume it is going to be fine to-morrow.

Throughout the country there is bitterly cold weather, which has come down from Canada. Chicago is having its worst period. I hope all that nonsense will be over by the time you sail.

Monday, 1st February, 1932.

I didn't do a great deal of work yesterday except to write a couple of letters to you, which wasn't exactly work. I am a little bit held up on my scenario, which has gone tame on me after a very excellent opening. It has gone wrong because of wrong characterisation, but I think I can correct this in a day.

It poured all day yesterday and was raining heavily at six this morning. I got up a couple of

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hours too soon and in consequence am tired. As a matter of domestic intelligence I have an ingrowing toe-nail and I am getting up a chiropodist (they are doctors here) to attend to it.

Joan Carr went to the Hustons to supper last night. They asked me, but I was a little too comfortable to go out. She has phoned me and told me that Richard Arlen and his wife were there, and that the conversation was entirely about me. Which shows !

Bob will be going home the week after you arrive. I am breaking it to you that there may be a little work for you ! I shall get a secretary for letters and for the ordinary secretarial duties, and I am trying to clear up all my work before he goes. If I find I have to stay on over the eight weeks, which is very unlikely, I will get somebody from New York, or I might even rush Miss Reissar out here.

Tuesday, 2nd February, 1932.

On Saturday night, I forgot to tell you, I met a Mrs. Glazier, who is a great friend of Greta Garbo's. Greta's reticence is no pose. She told me a lot about her. She was an assistant in a barber's shop—used to mix the lather—then went

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into a little hat shop, where Tiller, the producer, met her. He developed her into a Swedish success and eventually brought her to Hollywood, where she was getting £15 a week.

It rained all day. In the afternoon I had a letter from Constance Bennett, asking me to call. I took Joan Carr out to dinner at the Brown Derby, and was home soon after eleven and in bed by twelve.

This morning I had your cable about Afalcona and Bryan. Archie Falcom must be in a very bad way. I was afraid he would be when I saw him.

I really am working at the picture to-day, and want to turn it in to-morrow. It has been necessary to reconstruct it. As I shall probably direct it, I am trying to make it as easy as I can for myself. If I get the thing finished in time for the next mail I really will send you a copy.

A NEW CONTRACT

A NEW CONTRACT

Wednesday, 3rd February, 1932.

I WOKE at five, coughing, due to the very strong east wind that blew in on me, and, as I told you in my letter, I dozed all the morning until we tackled the scenario, when we came out of our trance.

I went down to the studio with the completed manuscript, and found Cooper and handed the script over to him. I found quite a lot of telephone messages which I had to answer, including one making me an offer for the talkie rights in "The Green Archer", which of course were sold. They now want the dialogue rights.

Cooper and I were going to lunch, but it was about a quarter to twelve and we thought it was an indecent hour. I had agreed to pick him up at half-past twelve, but by that time I had got in tow with Lee Marcus, who is the president of the Pathé Company, now allied to R.K.O.

He is a delightful man, a brilliant mind with a large and sane view of world affairs. You will probably see him in New York; I have asked him to call on you. Remember the name—Lee Marcus. Anyway, R.K.O. are going to do everything to

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facilitate your passage through the Customs, and I expect Carl Brandt will be doing the same.

Cooper came in later after we had finished lunch, and he had a Mr. and Mrs. Morris with him. They are from Tahiti, which is one of the Pacific islands.

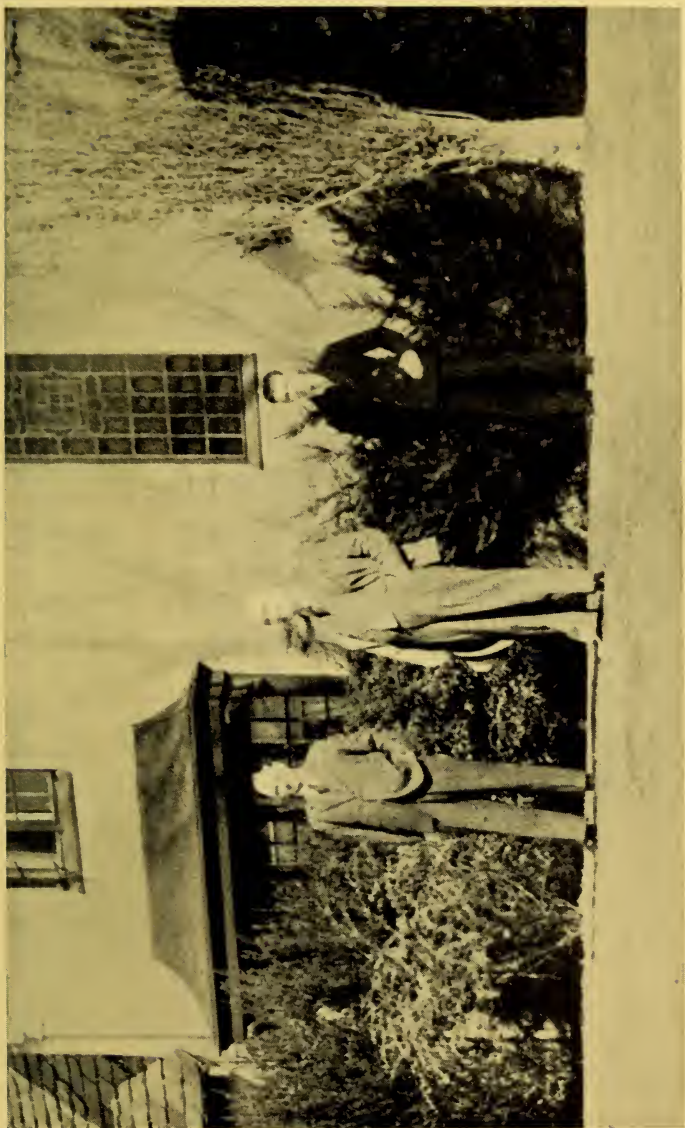
The curious thing on the coast is that you are constantly meeting folks from these queer out-of-the-way spots and from New Zealand.

You see, there is an association, and Los Angeles and San Francisco are, so to speak, sort of focusing points where east is east and west is west, and they somehow get together.

These people have a copra plantation and are friends of Cooper's—who, by the way, has just this moment telephoned saying he can't come up to-night because he's got a sore throat and he's going home. He read a bit of the scenario and liked it very much.

By the way, R.K.O. have given me a new contract, which is not a renewal of the old. Lee Marcus is all against my having contracts at all. He hasn't got one and never had one, so why bother about it, he says. Anyway, I've got it.

This afternoon I had a good sleep. The rain has passed off and we are having sunshine, but it is not the proper Los Angeles winter.



[General Photographic Agency

ONE OF THE LAST PICTURES TO BE TAKEN OF EDGAR WALLACE
IT SHOWS HIM WITH HIS SECRETARY (LEFT) AND VALET OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE AT BEVERLY HILLS

MY HOLLYWOOD DIARY

I hope you are getting your letters O.K., and that we are not missing mails. We put our trust rather in the air mails, and air mails have been crashing everywhere, though not on the Los Angeles-New York route, though there have been 'planes forced down by bad weather, and much of the mail has gone on by train.

INDISPOSED

INDISPOSED

Thursday, 4th February, 1932.

I HAVE got into the bad Hollywood habit of not sending out invitations to a dinner till about a day before the event. Apparently it is the practice here.

I am giving a dinner at the Embassy on Saturday night for Evelyn Brent and her husband, and I have just remembered that Heather Thatcher is here, and Guy is trying to find out where she is living. If I can get her on Saturday she'll be grand talking to Lowell Sherman—supposing I can get *him*.

I have a lot of heather and mimosa in my room and a couple of dozen sprigs of peach blossom—at least, I suppose it's peach blossom: it's a sort of old rose colour.

In addition to other decorations, I have a slight sore throat, but I think that is an aftermath of yesterday's sleeping in a breeze. Cooper has gone sick with a sore throat, which seems to be prevalent—that is to say, if Cooper and I have got a sore throat, it must be prevalent. My throat, however, isn't even sore; it only feels as if it's going to be sore.

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I saw nobody yesterday except the people from Polynesia, so there's no news to pass along. I have asked Genevieve Tobin to my party.

Friday, 5th February, 1932.

I nursed my cold all day yesterday. My throat is not very sore, and I have no temperature whatever.

Cooper has got exactly the same kind of throat. He blames the drinking water, but I think we can both trace our ailment to the sudden change of weather, and the dropping of temperature, accompanied by heavy rain.

In his case, he never wears an overcoat or a hat, and in my case I slept with the windows open. I don't think there is anything more mysterious about it than that.

I had your letter this morning. I was very pleased to have the cast, which I had not had before.

Tell Miss Ayling and all concerned not to wait for Friday or any definite day of the week before they write to you when you are here, but to write and post every day. I enclose you some five-cent air mail stamps to put on their letters. All they

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need do is to put a 2½d. stamp and that will carry an ounce.

If they write every day they will catch mails, and if they like to amuse themselves in looking up the boats they will very often catch an earlier mail and have a faster Atlantic passage.

Nothing specially new has happened since yesterday. This morning I have sent a cable to you and to Gerald [du Maurier], and on Monday I am sending a cable to the company and to Gerald.

Last night I had a frantic wire from Mary Pickford, which I enclose. I sent her some flowers on Christmas Eve and a note thanking her for all she did for Bryan, and she didn't acknowledge it. About five weeks later I sent her a note saying I hoped it hadn't gone astray, but that I shouldn't like her to feel that I was unappreciative of what she did for Bryan. I will probably dine with her next week.

Saturday, 6th February, 1932.

I took Joan to lunch yesterday at the Embassy. In the middle of lunch Marlene Dietrich came in with Sternberg and her little daughter.

There was nobody else of interest at the club, and nothing really happened that day. I am

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nursing this suppressed cold of mine, and went to bed at 10.30, had a very excellent night, and got up at 7.30.

Last week I slipped off a rostrum at the Mayfair and cut my ankle slightly. It is still bothering me, and I had to give it some sort of treatment last night. At ten o'clock to-day an osteopath is calling and treating me for my cold.

I hope to knock off a few articles to-day and start to-morrow on serious work. I have not had any reaction on my scenario yet, but then the executives are recovering from the visit of the bankers, who, thank heaven, have gone back to New York. Marcus has also gone, and I am sorry for that, because he's a swell fellow and I shall miss him.

To-day is damp and overcast. I have just had a talk with you on the phone, and your voice was as clear as the operator at Los Angeles. It was an amazingly good reception; I haven't had a better.

Your news about the play is very cheering, and I am not holding you to it if it flops. But somehow I feel you can always smell a flop when it's coming, and you never get quite that same feeling as you have when you see a pretty good play rehearsed with a competent cast.

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It must have been a very good experience for you, having a play put on while I am away, and although it must have been a bit of a strain and a trouble, it has been of immense value to you (said he smugly). But seriously, I do feel that you couldn't have had this experience under better conditions.

At this point the osteopath came, Dr. Bell. Make a note of his telephone number: Gladstone 0875. He gave me a real tossing about—broke my neck twice, broke my feet four times, gave me belly treatment and back treatment, used a vibrator and alcohol and generally left me feeling a better man.

I like him very much, and I've arranged for him to see me twice a week, not because I am ill but because I feel ever so much better after his treatment, which was for a cold and bronc.

He is a youngish-looking man, but he told me he's been thirty-three years in Hollywood and has only once seen a rattlesnake. Before he came I was feeling a little bit dopy, but I am quite gay and bright now. In fact, I feel I have had a tremendous lot of exercise without the weariness and concomitant perspiration.

THE LAST LETTER

THE LAST LETTER

Sunday, 7th February, 1932.

THERE was a time when my dinner party last night looked like being a frost. The Hustons couldn't come and the Selzniks couldn't come, and Heather, after accepting, rang up to say that she had to be at the studio at ten in the morning and wanted to go to bed early. Apparently they telephoned that she was not required, for about six she phoned saying she would be with us.

I arranged for the party to meet at the house for cocktails, and Marie, who rose nobly to the occasion, had all sorts of little anchovies and celery cheeses and whatnots, and Robert produced two varieties of cocktails, which were approved.

Dr. Ellis Jones and Mrs. Jones came early. They are very nice, simple people, and, curiously enough, they had never been to a Hollywood party, though heaven knows there was nothing exciting about it.

Then I discovered that nobody had called for Genevieve Tobin, and when we got her number we discovered that she was on her way, so that was all right. Lowell Sherman, who is really a most

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amusing devil, arrived. He said he had been with the polo players for three days.

Heather, looking her usually marvellous self, arrived in my car, which I sent for her. She lives about ten miles away from me. By the way, she brought me an invitation to Ivor Novello's farewell party, at which the Crawfords and Douglas Fairbanks, etc., will be present. It might be fun, and if I can get a good start on my story, I'll go.

Harry Edwards and Evelyn Brent came a little late, and young Jesse Lasky brought Joan. The surprise of the evening was Ricardo Cortez, who turned up. I wasn't sure that he was coming. Robert, in his grand habille, and Marie in black, looked after them, and, as Marie said, it was a pleasure to wait on them. They certainly were a lovely collection of women.

We got to the club about a quarter to ten, having sent eight small bottles of champagne down in advance, a bottle of whisky, and two bottles of red wine. That is a recognised practice : you send it on in a bag, and the waiters bring it in, having first ostentatiously placed ginger-ale and white rock on the table.

It was a very gay party and quite amusing. I had Mrs. Jones on my left and Betty Brent on my right. At the next table was Fatty Arbuckle ;

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he is a most amusing devil. I was introduced to him by Lowell Sherman. All the evening he was singing quietly to himself, improvising words to the music.

Lily Damita was at another table and came over, and Thelma Todd, and I don't know how many other stars. Sari Maritza came with a party very late, looking lovely. I had a long talk with Evelyn and a long talk with Genevieve Tobin, who I think is a very fine actress.

It was half-past two before anybody made a move to go, and I was home at three, having brought Heather, Genevieve, and young Jesse Lasky, who had left his car outside my house and was picking it up to take Genevieve back to Los Angeles, and from Los Angeles to where he was living at Santa Monica. In other words, he had a thirty-mile drive ahead of him when I left him.

I think Heather had a lovely time. Yours and Penny's photographs were shown round and admired. I was talking to Ellis Jones about Penny's glands. He was pointing out what a marvellous thing it was that Penny did develop appendicitis. He said the pains were probably not caused by the appendix at all, but by the conditions which the glands had set up, and what a great blessing it was that the operation was performed.

He said that there is a doctor in London who

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is curing rheumatism by injections, and he gave me his name, which I am telegraphing. He said this man has had marvellous cures.

There is going to be another club night at the Embassy—they have them every fortnight—the night you arrive, but I think you'll be too tired for a party, and I am arranging this the following Saturday. I think everybody will want to give you a party; the Hustons and the Brents certainly will. You ought to have a gay time, though not perhaps the most restful time, though you can sleep in this house till one o'clock in the day, it is so quiet.

The Joneses want you to go to Santa Barbara one week-end and stay from Saturday to Monday in one of the little cottages at a club there. They say it is so lovely that you mustn't miss it. But that is probably the Saturday I want to take you to Agua Caliente.

I want Genevieve Tobin to play in this new picture I have written as soon as I can get it passed by the executive and we discuss it at length. She is very enthusiastic, and I think she is the right type. She is pretty, and she can act, which is very important.

Good bye ! Edgar wallace

*This is the message that Edgar Wallace scribbled
on a streamer resting on the rail of the
Empress of Britain as she
left Southampton for
America.*

GLOSSARY

Afalcona (racehorse)
Ayling, Miss (Penny's governess)
Balcon (Michael)
Bannerman, Bunny (Margaret Bannerman)
Bob (Curtis—secretary)
Brandt, Carl } (Edgar Wallace's agents in America)
Freedman, Harold }
Brenon (Herbert—director)
Bruce, Nigel (or Willie)
Bryan (Edgar Wallace's son)
Bunny (Bruce)
Chalklands (Edgar Wallace's country house)
Cooper or "Coop" (Merian Cooper)
Elsa (Lanchester)
Fayette (Krum)
Feeney (Mrs. Wallace's chauffeur)
Freedman, Harold } (Edgar Wallace's agents in America)
Brandt, Carl }
Gerald (du Maurier)
Gleeson (James—actor)
Hastings, Pat (Sir Patrick)
Karen (Ostrer)
Linnit, Bill (S. E. Linnit, manager, Wyndham's Theatre)
Marcus (Lee)
Mark (Ostrer)
Michael (Edgar Wallace's son)
Pat (Edgar Wallace's daughter)
Penny (Edgar Wallace's daughter)
Robert (Downs—valet)
Sam (S. W. Smith)
Selnik (Selznick)
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Tookie (Buchanan)

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